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THE HIBBERT JOURNAL.

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF RELIGION,
THEOLOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY.

Extract from the Editorial published in Vol. I., No. 1.

THE differences of opinion existing in regard to matters religious, theological, and philosophical are recognised by the Editors of THE HIBBERT JOURNAL in the spirit in which any natural phenomena would be regarded. As Editors of this Journal it is not for us to deplore these differences nor to take measures for their reconciliation. We shall judge of opinions by the seriousness with which they are held and the fairness and ability with which they are maintained. Among extant varieties of religious thought none is selected by us as the type to which the rest should conform.

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JESUS OR CHRIST?

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JESUS OR CHRIST?

EDITORIAL PREFACE.

THE origin of the present volume may be traced to an article by the Rev. R. Roberts of Bradford, which appeared in the HIBBERT JOURNAL for January 1909, under the title "Jesus or Christ? An Appeal for Consistency." As some of the writers in the volume refer to this article, it has been reprinted at the end for purposes of reference. At the same time it should be understood that what follows in these pages has a more comprehensive aim than that of discussing the conclusions of Mr Roberts. What is here under discussion is the *whole problem* of the relation of the Jesus of History to the Christ of Religion, and not alone the particular aspects of it, or the view of those aspects, selected for treatment by the writer aforesaid. Contributors have been requested to deal with the matter freely, and to refer to Mr Roberts only as occasion might require.

The result of the appearance of Mr Roberts' article in January last was somewhat remarkable. Within a week of publication, replies and criticisms, eulogies and condemnations, began to pour in from all quarters. Even now, after an interval of seven months, the stream continues to flow. Moreover, the article was publicly discussed by preachers and lecturers, as well as in the religious and the daily Press. This

seems to show that, whatever Mr Roberts has succeeded in doing, or failed to do, the question he has asked is vividly present to the minds of many, and one on which thoughtful men are seeking for light. The impression made on a mind which had closely followed the public discussions, as well as read all the varied contributions which have been offered to the *HIBBERT JOURNAL* in connection with the matter, could hardly fail to be this: Here is a question which men are pondering deeply and anxiously, but which, either from reasons of reticence or from lack of opportunity, has not yet received (at least in England) the measure of impartial investigation demanded alike by the gravity of the issue and the intellectual standards of the age. Under these circumstances it would be idle to ask whether it is wise to raise the question. The question is already raised; it has been forced upon thoughtful minds by a multitude of concurrent causes operating for many years; and the process of answering it cannot be arrested by any means whatsoever. There is a sense, of course, in which the question is old—old as Christianity—as more than one contributor to this volume has pointed out; on the other hand, when placed in the context of modern life and thought, the question is entirely new. On this account, it is futile to refer the modern inquirer to answers given in the first, the fifth, the sixteenth, or even the early nineteenth century, even though the question asked by him is word for word identical with the problem which St Paul, or St Augustine, or Luther, or Channing, or Newman endeavoured to solve. As there can be no doubt that the question is already raised, so there can be none that it is raised in a new sense.

For these reasons it seemed desirable that an attempt should be made to enlist the services of the competent in aiding thoughtful men to a right consideration of this great issue. And competence in a matter of this kind is not con-

stituted by scholarship alone. It was felt that only such men as have won the confidence of the public by proved devotion to the causes they severally represent could be trusted with the handling of such a theme. No one, indeed, will find himself able to concur in all that is written in this volume, for the writers have been deliberately chosen with a view to including the largest variety of opinion. But the Editor feels himself able to claim that what is here presented is marked throughout by a degree of sincerity and a sense of grave responsibility consonant with the nature of the subject, guaranteed by the names of the writers, and amply attested by what they have written. And if it be said that the result is confusing, he would plead, in answer, that the way which leads from confusion to order is a long one, and that a careful reading of this volume will show to a discerning mind that the first steps towards order are being taken. It is better to face the difficulties arising from the varied opinions of the competent than to remain among the worst confusions of unguided thought. And that seems to be the alternative—unless, indeed, a man's faith is of the kind which can tolerate no divergence, much less opposition; in which case he is hardly likely to be a reader of the *HIBBERT JOURNAL*, or of this Supplement.

In much that has been said and elsewhere written both in praise and in blame of Mr Roberts' original article, there have been signs of prejudice. Those who were rash enough to say that Mr Roberts had settled either the question as a whole or any part of it were certainly premature. On the other hand, the distinguished critics who found fault with him—in some cases contemptuously—for trespassing beyond the bounds of sober exegesis, did not perhaps sufficiently consider how far their own more cautious work is responsible for such extreme results as those to which Mr Roberts gave expression. When once criticism has been started in a certain direction,

and the most moderate degree of change suggested, the door is at once opened on the unknown. There is no controlling the reaction of other men's minds on a new idea or a new method ; and if other men, employing the very method which we ourselves have introduced, reach, by its means, results which repel us, we have no right to condemn them harshly. Were strict account to be taken, it might turn out that the tools with which Mr Roberts has worked were forged, or at least sharpened, by the persons whose judgment on his use of them has been most severe.

These kinds of excess or unfairness, on either side, the Editor has sought to avoid in the present volume. The temptation to indulge in either can hardly have arisen to the writers whose names appear below ; and the wider form in which the question has been treated has diminished the other dangers incident to mere controversy waged round the name of a person, an article, or a book.

The Editor would express his thanks to the various writers for the pains they have taken to lighten his labour in seeing the volume through the press. Especially are these thanks due to the foreign scholars engaged. Their extraordinary skill in revising the translation of their writings has made it possible to present an exact reproduction of their thought. One of the English contributors, alas ! has passed away almost as these lines are being written. The essay which stands first in this volume is among the very latest of Father Tyrrell's writings. As such, it will possess a pathetic interest to all who mourn his early loss. He displayed, in wonderful combination, the gifts of intellect, of character, and of soul which mark the great leaders of religious thought and life.

July 1909.

THE POINT AT ISSUE.

THE LATE REV. G. TYRRELL.

THE doctrine of the Godhead of Christ was fixed and formulated, after some centuries of discussion, in the official creeds of the Catholic Church. It seems to me that what many are attacking, and what many are defending, under the name of the Godhead of Christ, is often a totally different doctrine, connected with, but by no means identical with, say, the Athanasian doctrine.

Some of these defenders may answer that they feel the inadequacy of the old formula, and are in search of a better; that the Nicene formula was itself an emendation of earlier formulas; that the Church has never lost her right to emend. I reply that the Nicene formula marked a climax in the exaltation of Jesus. We cannot exalt him above God. His Godhead may be made more intelligible, but any formula that excludes the Nicene is another doctrine, and not a more developed re-statement. It must be what is vulgarly called a "climb-down" from *Deus* to *divinus*, from *θεός* to *θεῖος*.

We are lately familiarised with a distinction between the historical Christ—the Jesus of the gospels, and the Eternal Christ—Jesus immanent in the Christian community, and revealing himself progressively to its faith. We usually speak of Jesus in the first case, and of Christ in the second. They are not the names of two beings, unless for those who mean by Christ an ideal suggested by, symbolised and honoured in, its partial realisation—in the historical Jesus. They are names of one person. "Jesus" is denotative; "Christ" is

connotative or explanatory.¹ "Christ," or rather "the Christ," explains the office and mission of Jesus—what he is for the faith of those who believe in him. In the course of time its comprehension has been deepened. Its earliest and minimum meaning was that which the Jews of the Gospel age attached to it. When Peter said "Thou art the Christ," he used a familiar and popular term. Even if he added "the Son of the living God," it is not clear that the sonship implied was other in kind from that of Israel or Solomon—though more advanced criticism sees in the "Son of Man" an apocalyptic other-world Being with whom Jesus claimed some sort of identity. Whatever the apostle's meaning, his words, while not contradicting, were quite inadequate to the Nicene doctrine. Later, "Christ" comes to imply not merely the adoptive sonship of grace, but that of one of whose natural generation God, and not a human father, was co-principle: "*Therefore* that Holy Thing which is born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Later still, the sonship is recognised as that of an eternal, superhuman being—the Logos, or the Heavenly Adam—incarnate in the humanity of Jesus. Next, it is no longer the sonship of a divine being, subordinate to God, as the previous formula might imply, but that of a precisely similar and coequal being. Then this formula was felt to favour ditheism, and prejudice monotheism, and so the sonship was defined as that not merely of a similar, but of an identical nature and substance with the Father. Lastly rose the problem of reconciling the personal dualism of Father and Son with an identity of this kind; and after a struggle with modalism, orthodox Trinitarianism and the Hypostatic union held the field. "Christ" now means the Second Person of the Trinity made man.

¹ "Jesus" as meaning "God's salvation"—if it does—has come to be connotative for the Church. For the contemporaries of Jesus it was no more so than are "John" or "James" for us. It was just as common and non-significant. Had it meant for them a claim to be the world's redeemer, to be even more than the Jewish "Christ," there could have been no reason for concealing his Christhood so cautiously.

According to orthodox tradition this is what "Christ" meant for the Church from the very first. These succeeding formulas have merely, by their greater verbal exactitude, excluded ambiguities and misinterpretations. The faithful who said "of similar substance" meant "of identical substance," but their words left room for a denial of the latter. "Christ" on the lips of Peter meant "God the Son made man," but did not exclude lower interpretations.

A new apologetic, hard pressed by criticism, holds that the Spirit of Jesus, ever immanent in his Church, and leading her into all truth, opens her eyes progressively to the implications of his life and doctrine. It sees in these succeeding formulas a deeper apprehension of the meaning of the historical Jesus—a meaning hidden from earlier generations.

If this is historical truth, it is certainly not orthodox or patristic truth. The idea that vital points of faith could have been hidden from the apostolic age, and revealed only to later centuries; that the appeal was to the future, and not to the past, would have been reputed blasphemous by the Fathers and early Councils. In faith, the Church was perfect from the first and immutable. What men know only potentially, as conclusions they might draw but have not drawn, they do not know; they may even deny it. An avowed atheist is not a believer simply because his premisses ought to lead him to theism. If the ante-Nicene Church had not deduced the Nicene conclusions; if it did not know that Jesus was of identical substance with the Father, it was ignorant of a vital article of faith. For orthodoxy, that is an impossible admission. It holds that, whatever the ante-Nicene Church said, the Nicene faith is what, under its inadequate terminology, it always meant. If it did not state the full truth, it held it not potentially but actually—as something implied, too obvious to mention in absence of any heretical denial. That is the orthodox position: *sc.*, Councils (or Popes, for that matter) do not debate and decide what were previously open questions; they do not make that to be "of

faith" which before was not "of faith." They only declare that it always was "of faith"; was held not only *ubique* or *ab omnibus*, but *semper*; that those who question it are heretics as dissenting from the common and perpetual belief, not as disobeying a new law of belief. They but proclaim and impose on errant individuals the authority, not of their own belief, but of the collective belief.

In the light of recent criticism, it is increasingly difficult to find the Nicene Christology in the New Testament and the ante-Nicene Church. Hence the recourse to a hypothesis of development applied not merely to theology, where its right is indisputable, but to faith and revelation. But if this hypothesis is a deference to history, it is also a defiance of history. It supposes that the apostolic Church viewed its Christ-faith as but embryonic, and looked forward to far distant ages for the fulness of revelation. To evade this inconvenience, some fall into a greater in speaking as though the treasure of full revelation accorded to the apostolic age, and committed to the Church's guardianship, had at once dropped from her hand, and the rest of her life had been spent in trying to find the lost fragments. Against this view both history and orthodoxy join hands. What divides them, therefore, is the question as to whether or not the Christ of the Church's official creeds is identical with the Jesus divined from the New Testament; or, in other words, whether the New Testament means, and means *consciously*, what is only more accurately and technically worded by the creeds.

The New Testament "Jesus," not the New Testament "Christ." For the latter is the doctrine of the earliest church about Jesus. We have further to ask if that Christhood and all it connotes were a legitimate interpretation of the historic Jesus as divined by us through the Gospel record. That record as it stands is already a work of interpretation. Before being put on paper, events and personalities have to pass through the categories of the writer's mind. Prior to the critical era, the historic Jesus was Jesus as interpreted by the

gospels, including the fourth. With that figure it was not very easy, but comparatively easy, to make the creeds agree against Arian or Unitarian interpretations. Apart from isolated texts, there was the broad fact that Jesus seemed to call men less to his teaching than to himself as the embodiment of the life and truth that he taught; that he made personal love and devotion to himself the equivalent to salvation and the righteousness it involves. This was implicitly to take God's place in relation to the soul—the place which Jesus has actually taken for Christians; a place which no other religious teacher, neither Moses, nor the Bouddha, nor Mahomet, has ever claimed or received.

But now we have a double task—that of divining the historic Jesus through the Gospel record, and that of comparing the Jesus, so found, with the Christ of the creeds.

With the value of critical conclusions I am not here concerned, but only with the state of the question: Does the predicate “Christ,” as interpreted by the creeds, agree with the subject “Jesus,” as determined by criticism?

It is with regard to this predicate that I notice much confusion—with regard to the orthodox interpretation of the Divine sonship implied in “Christ”; not the sonship of a man related in time to God, but that of the Eternal Son hypostatically united in time to an individual and complete human nature.

For this confusion I find two reasons. First, the current conception of personality as distinct from that of the creeds and orthodox theologians. The latter was to a large extent shaped by controversial exigencies to explain how the supernatural Being incarnate in Jesus could be the Son of God, personally distinct from the Father, yet of identical and not merely similar substance, in such sort that the Son alone was made man, and not the Father or the Spirit.

Outside theology a person means, and always meant, a separate spiritual individual, a separate mind, will, and energy. According to this use we must say that there are two persons

in Christ—two minds, two wills, two energies, human and divine; that in the Deity there is but one person—one mind, will, and operation. For us there is no real distinction whatever between an individual spiritual nature and its personality. Hence, when our creed tells us there is but one personality in Christ, we interpret it almost inevitably as meaning a union of natures, a mixture or confusion of divine and human attributes in a third hybrid nature that is a blend of both; we imagine a man whose mind is omniscient, whose energy is omnipotent. Our language is orthodox, but our mind is monophysite. Our idea of God being necessarily anthropomorphic in some degree, the notion of a man with divine attributes does not strike us as contradictory. We seem only to define, contract, and materialise that Deity which for us is but man expanded and dematerialised.

Hence, when in the gospels, and still more in the criticised gospels, we find evidence of finitude of Christ's human mind and power, we accept it as evidence against his divinity in the orthodox sense.

If, adverting to our heresy, we try to insist on the duality and separateness of the divine and human natures, we almost as inevitably imagine a duality of persons, and become Nestorian in our thought while remaining orthodox in our language.

Thus our thought oscillates between the poles of Nestorianism and Eutychianism, through our inability to give any real content to the word "person" as used by theologians. Yet of the two heresies the Nestorian is far nearer to theological orthodoxy than the other, while it is perhaps further from popular non-theological Christology, which is prevalently monophysite.

Another cause favouring the monophysite tendency is found in certain subsidiary doctrines deduced from the divinity of Christ. Being congruous rather than necessary deductions, their denial does not logically entail that of the primary doctrine. For the fulfilment of his mission and for

the dignity of his divine personality it was fitting that the human spirit of Christ should be endowed with miraculous gifts of knowledge, goodness, and power. If the first and earthly Adam in his unfallen state possessed the fulness of all possible human knowledge and wisdom, still more must the second and heavenly Adam be equipped with all but divine prerogatives. From the first instant of his conception, besides a miraculously infused knowledge of all historical and scientific truth that man ever shall or ever can attain to; besides a knowledge of all that ever can be known by divine revelation, his human mind enjoyed uninterruptedly the face-to-face vision of God. This was all additional to that knowledge which he acquired as man in the natural way, and yet distinct from the omniscience of the mind of his divine nature. Similarly, his human will, though distinct from his omnipotent divine will, was endowed with almost unlimited miraculous power over the whole realm of nature. However great and wonderful, these attributes were finite—the endowments of his finite human spirit. They did not make him God; though it is difficult to see how they left him man, and not some new sort of being more angelic than human; how one so raised above ignorance and passion should have exemplified virtues of which ignorance and passion are the subject-matter; how a being of such complex psychology could furnish a pattern for, or atone as a representative of, ordinary humanity.

Now these attributions have done much to favour a practically monophysite conception of the divinity of Jesus. These regalia of his humanity are imagined as the essence of his Godhead. If, in the historic Jesus of the critics, we find evidence against such miraculous endowments, we are apt to think that it tells against his divinity. It would do so were they necessary, and not merely congruous consequences of the hypostatic union. Undoubtedly it tells against a very important chapter of orthodox Christology. But we can conceive no facts or signs by which so transcendental a truth as the hypostatic union could become matter of historical affirma-

tion or denial. Personality as over and above the individuality of a man so completely evades our observation, not to say our conception, that the substitution of a divine for a human personality in the case of Jesus can no more be historically or scientifically disproved than the absence of the substance of bread in a consecrated host. All the accidents and effects are the same; all that the vulgar mind means by substance remains. So all that it means by personality remains whether the "theological" personality of Jesus be human or divine. He might have been perfect God and perfect man, in the Athanasian sense, without any sort of miraculous endowment, and with all the limitations of ordinary humanity. Criticism then can tell against the monophysite Christ that so many *soi-disant* orthodox are defending, or against certain deductions, *ex congruo*, of Athanasian Christology, but against the substance of that Christology it can do nothing.

If, however, it could prove that Jesus was unconscious of his Godhead; that he never laid claim to it; that his utterances implicitly deny it, this would be a scandal for the orthodox, who base their belief solely on his own claims to divinity. It would not disprove his Godhead, but would abolish what, for them, is the only proof of it.

Apologists of the new school might still say that Jesus, in spirit, lives on in his Church, and arrives at an ever deeper and fuller self-consciousness; that the Athanasian doctrine thus rests on the authority, not of the mortal Jesus, but of the risen Jesus immanent in the Church; that the process of revelation continues still; that the appeal is not to the Past but to the Future. This is a complete inversion of the patristic and orthodox idea of a once-for-all revelation, and of the supreme enlightenment of the apostolic age. Nothing was further from the Nicene Fathers than that they meant anything more than S. Peter meant. Yet, if unorthodox, the new apologetic is not quite unreasonable.

We ourselves are mysteries to ourselves. The meaning of the pronoun "I" is the mystery of mysteries. We are im-

measurably more than we can ever comprehend. Our relation to God and to the Whole is inscrutable, for all the relations we can conceive are between objects and parts and phenomena. Our self-knowledge, therefore, is not the measure of what we are. Still less likely is it that the human mind of Jesus was the measure of what he was, if he was God. To comprehend the mode of union means to comprehend both its terms; and of these one at least (if not the other) is, for every finite mind, incomprehensible. That the finite mind of Jesus and of the Church, his continuation, should only progressively penetrate the mystery of his being, is not therefore an unreasonable hypothesis. At all events it nullifies the objections of criticism founded on the apparent silence of Jesus, or more than silence, as to his Godhead. In this view the creeds attempt to formulate what Jesus reveals himself to be in the inward experience not only of the apostolic but of all subsequent ages—man's Saviour and God; one to whom is due that adoration and absolute self-surrender that we yield only to God, to Conscience, to Righteousness; who is therefore identical with all we mean or ought to mean by Deity.

The main difficulty of the doctrine of Christ's Godhead as understood by the creeds is a rational one: *sc.*, Can we attach any intellectual meaning to it at all? Have we concepts answering to our words? If not, can we intelligently affirm or deny what conveys no more meaning to us than the proposition "Christ is x "?

A pragmatist might say that what supplies no rule of thought may supply a rule of conduct and speech; that what cannot be conceived and reconciled by the mind may be implied and reconciled in action; that by comporting ourselves towards Jesus sometimes as towards a man, sometimes as towards God, we act most in accordance with an inaccessible truth. This may be reasonable, but it is not orthodox.

Our creeds were not framed by pragmatists, but by men who had three beliefs to reconcile: (1) that Jesus was an incarnation of God; (2) that God is numerically one; (3) that

Jesus was a personality distinct from the Father. The solution was found in the idea of a "something" added to an already individualised spiritual being (though in the case of God there could be no real addition), which was called personality. Yet no content was given to that "something." It was simply a word to express the solution of a difficulty that could not be solved; an *x* to symbolise a missing link by which Godhead and manhood might be united without confusion of natures; "something" which was distinct from the existent perfection of those natures, and yet not *really* distinct from the divine nature. Elsewhere personality had and has a determined meaning—the individuality of a spiritual being. Here, and here alone, it has no determined meaning; it is "something" over and above the individuality of a perfect spiritual being. That God is not one person is because of three "somethings" distinct from one another but identical with his one substance—so distinct that one of these persons can be incarnate while the other two are not. One of these "somethings" can supply the place of that "something" which, added to the completely individualised humanity of Jesus, would have made him a human instead of a divine "person." This is the orthodox Athanasian doctrine. What many are attacking or defending under the name of the Godhead of Christ is the doctrine of a more or less divinised man. Hence, in endeavouring to state the question, I have insisted on the orthodox rather than on the critical position. To estimate the gulf between them it would be well to read, as I have done, first, the Third Part of the *Summa* of S. Thomas Aquinas; then, Albert Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, an account of the oscillations and progress of Gospel criticism. As against the new apologetic, whether that of the pragmatists or that of those mystics who continue Jesus and his revelation in the Church, the assaults of criticism are not so embarrassing. But whether their departure from orthodoxy in the interests of orthodoxy is consistent or defensible is an entirely different question that does not concern us here.

It is not, however, only the orthodox or their new and

unwelcome apologists who find the results of criticism embarrassing. Those who have quite frankly broken with orthodoxy and with its miraculous Christ can hardly make such concessions to criticism without being forced yet further. They would still retain for him an unique and central position in relation to humanity; they would hold him divine in a singular sense, or at least degree; they would see in Jesus an incarnation or embodiment of all those liberal and liberating ideas which characterise our own time. They would trace the modern mind and ethos to him as its first source and impulse. In this sense he would be the Saviour, the Way, the Truth, the Life; nay, he would be vicariously and representatively God, the manifestation in flesh of all that God means for us. Some even go so far as to give him a sort of metaphysical Godhead, but only at the price of conceding a lower degree of the same to all men. But plainly God's immanence in the human spirit as a co-principle of its life involves neither personal nor substantial identity. By free moral union with that co-principle man becomes Godlike, but he does not become God. At most, then, Jesus would be the most Godlike of men. But man owes no adoration, no unqualified self-surrender even to the most Godlike of men—only to the absolutely Divine. Between God and Godlike the distance is infinite.

But the great ethical and liberal Teacher of Schleiermacher and Ritschl is not less hardly pressed by criticism than the Christ of the creeds. As the gospels stand, they show us that the substance of the teaching of Jesus was partly ethical and partly eschatological. The liberal school has hitherto assumed that the latter element was accidental, occasional, negligible; that the former was principal and alone essential. Slowly but surely their own methods have, in the hands of Johannes Weiss and others, inverted this judgment; have assigned the liberal and universalist elements to subsequent Pauline emendations, and have left us a Jesus whose inspiration and enthusiasm were entirely religious, mystical, and transcendent, but in no sense liberal or modern-minded. Taken

out of its Jewish frame, his Gospel was of the other world and not of this, a Gospel of individual immortality—of hope in another life against the despair of this life. Such a Jesus would have been far more in sympathy with orthodoxy than with liberalism. Hence it is that M. Loisy, accepting the basis of criticism, has in *l'Évangile et l'Église* been able to supplant the construction of Dr Harnack by one of a more catholic character. Orthodoxy very naturally suspects these gifts from a hostile hand, for which a heavy bill may be presented later. But *fas est ab hoste doceri*.

G. TYRRELL.

“WHO SAY YE THAT I AM?”

THE RIGHT REV. E. S. TALBOT, D.D.

Bishop of Southwark.

THE question suggested by the title “Jesus or Christ?” is in substance nothing other or less than the one put by the Master to His disciples, “Who say ye that I am?” But it takes a particular form which (however open to misconception) may be regarded as a sign that our time has learnt to treat the question in its own distinctive way. It is in mental habit an age of the becoming or coming to be, concerned not only with the “what” but the “how” of things in their growth, development, and connection. “The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith” can to the Christian be none other than two names and titles of the one being known as Jesus and understood as Christ, and within a generation currently spoken of by his followers as Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and who is adored as ever living “at the Right Hand of God.” The suggestion that one is the name of a man, and the other the designation of “an Ideal,” is doubtfully intelligible and very misleading. But the conjunction and contrast of the two names in the title points to a fresh and wholly legitimate interest in the method of the Incarnation and in the relation (too little considered) of what Jesus “began to do and to teach” in the days of His flesh with the sequels of Divine purpose in the days that followed. It were strange if after two thousand years, and in an unprecedented epoch of historical and critical reflection, there were not much

to say and to consider under these heads. If a Churchman can contribute anything of distinctive value to such a discussion as the present, it is because his belief makes it natural to him to suggest that an old and much-tried hypothesis, which has seemed to innumerable men to be a living reality, may do more to bring the gains of a new time into proportion and harmony than will be done by attempts to raise some new construction out of a general shuffle of the materials.¹

That hypothesis is, of course, contained in the belief which gained credence that God, the Being from whom all things spring, and in whom they all 'consist,' the Being of whom Life and Thought and Love in man are jets or offshoots, and of whom therefore there is in every man some indwelling, did in One life embody His presence among men in such a way as to take upon Himself human conditions, to exhibit in perfectness the right attitude, temper, and proportion of human life, to bear human sufferings, to break through the inexorable constraints of moral evil and of death, and to introduce into humanity a new power of spiritual life; and, along with all this, to give to men some knowledge, limited of course but essentially true, of God's own being: such knowledge being given in the way that our best knowledge of character always comes, namely, through action and not through words.

Accepting this as a rude summary for our present purpose, the following things are to be noted about it:—

1. This was in actual effect, what it was at once called, "good news" for men, of incalculable value, and such as no

¹ It may be a disadvantage in this way of treating the matter that it draws upon itself in combination particular objections to the Christian belief, and those of a more general kind which are opposed to any genuine belief in incarnation or immanence of Divine Being in human life, even of the most diffusive and pantheistic kind. But this is inevitable. Personally, I am disposed to think that the philosophic or other adumbrations of Incarnation will not have more vitality apart from the Christ to whom God meant them to point than had the Jewish anticipations of Messiah after the rejection of the true King. If this be so, there is really but a single issue, and it is only good that everyone should realise how much is at stake in it, not only of what is definitely Christian, but further, of all the noblest thoughts and aspirations of humanity.

one had forecast. This is what is meant by the paradox that it was "too good not to be true." It is only pedantry which can go to the other extreme and attach no weight to the testimony of results.

2. It had the double effect of making Godhead and manhood terms of far more distinct meaning and value. Godhead, which had been of doubtful reality and often of questionable character, became the most real of existences, the most significant and the best. Manhood acquired a value which its perishableness, frailty, and fault could not destroy, and became (so to say) more truly human, more deeply itself.

Nor was there any loss to set against such gain. No conception which human thought could associate with Godhead was impaired by the new belief, unless it were that of Absoluteness, pure and simple, which is really only a negation, or that of God's equal responsibility for good and evil, which is morally unthinkable. And on the human side there was no intrinsic change or disturbance in the practical problem of life; duty, truth, love, and all the deeper things remained what they were: only these also became far more distinct and more intelligible.

There was, moreover, no mixing or confusing; no whittling away of the conceptions of Divine and human, to make them fit into a new and pleasant or ingenious supposition.

All this may be asserted as fact proved by the whole tenor of the best Christian thinking and experience.

3. I pass by as less closely, though not less really, related to the present discussion the apt accord between what was then believed and certain instincts or aspirations of men expressed in stories of incarnation and theophany, and in particular that special instinct of hope which in the Hebrew people had surmised some future revealing of the fire or glory of God's presence among them. If such things be compared with that which the Good News announced, its accord with them, and its utter transcendence of them and unlikeness to them, are equally important to those who allow any value

or credit to the deeper human instincts, but are sensible of the limitations to which those instincts are subject.

Now there is a sense or senses in which it may be most rightly said that such a thing is its own best evidence. Its extraordinarily illuminating and dignifying influence upon human life, the incompetence of that age to achieve without obvious failure a creation so splendid but so perilously difficult, the diffusive moral effect of the belief in Jesus Christ, and the alleged experience of His personal influence upon unnumbered people from that time to this, are all so many obstacles to any explanation which would make it either an invention or a mistake.

Yet it is not like an idea of which the self-consistency may prove the reality. The Incarnation of Christ claims to have happened: it comes out into the region of the facts that change and the days that pass: it invites attention to the way in which it was wrought, and by which men were convinced of it. No living apprehension of it is possible which does not seek it thus on its own ground. We are not asked to believe in one presented to us as a heavenly or divine being called Son of God, but only to recognise (Spirit-taught) the full significance of what Jesus was and did and achieved.

What opportunity have we for doing so?

It is perhaps true to say that the threefold credentials of the Good News were the life and character of Jesus, certain things believed to have happened to Him, and an impression borne home into the minds of His followers by these two combined. The result was offered by them with unhesitating confidence to all men's acceptance.

Accordingly we shall begin to see the delicacy of the task which these men had to discharge: and which, when they had passed away, was still to be done by help of the written records which they left. We may measure the difficulty by the alternative failures which were likely. Either they would record the 'facts' of Jesus so fully, meticulously, and elaborately that attention would be diverted and insight balked, 'the wood

would not be seen for the trees,' and the great 'Fact' of Him would not be discerned. Or they would be so possessed with that Fact, with the conclusion which they had reached, with the belief about His nature and work with which they had become possessed, that they would lose all power to tell things as they had really been, and would either treat particulars with contempt, offering to the world a doctrine or an ideal person, or else would give a narrative distorted by their prepossessions out of all likeness to truth.

How these dangers were avoided is seen in the New Testament that we have received. We have the record carefully made and cherished: it is in use in the Acts: it is preserved in outline in the Gospels. And we have the meaning declared and impressed, taught and preached, in the Epistles. The latter has not superseded the former: it only dominates it in the same way that a man's character, once known, dominates our attitude to his particular words and acts without making us less eager to hear these, and to know them accordingly. Criticism has perhaps failed to emphasise sufficiently for us one of its best results, which is that, believing as the Epistles show them to have believed, the disciples should have recorded and been careful about recording as they did in the Gospels of contemporaneous and later date. I am of course aware that in saying this I may seem to beg important critical questions about the record. But at least as regards the Synoptists, whatever estimate is formed of their accuracy, any sober criticism must recognise their essential unlikeness to a narrative in which the desire to illustrate or embody a theological belief has got the better of the desire to tell a plain tale. Their contents are still genuine inductive material.

But no doubt our induction is not independent. We are under the influence of those who first brought and explained the Good News. They had received an impression: they had come to a conclusion: they held a belief about the Person of Jesus. No doubt this was due primarily and mainly to what they believed that they knew of His victory over death. But

I would desire to insist that it was not wholly due to this. This only assisted what in any such case would be the natural and quite legitimate process. It is of first-rate importance to realise how little facts of any kind are fully taken in at the moment of experience. We see a scene, but an artist's sketch or picture reveals to us later the essential quality in it which we had missed; or a face, and a master's portrait interprets to us its subtleties of meaning and expression and makes us catch its spirit. Seldom is a character or life really gathered up and known in its true proportions and import until its close, and often the death brings to many intelligence of what the few had always though imperfectly discerned. The same is true of great experiences, great emotions, great thoughts. It is only afterwards that they are fully known. Of course this carries with it a risk of adulteration, of loss of parts and overstress on other parts; but this is inevitable, and is not more than a reasonable discount on what we gain. When we are thinking of the effect produced upon Peter and John by Him with whom they had lived in company, and of what they said about Him, these considerations seem to be both relevant and important. But, unquestionably, what would thus happen in a measure in any case where an end is reached and retrospect interprets, happened in an altogether higher degree here. Their belief in the Resurrection by which Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power" undoubtedly deepened and increased the influence of retrospect. Did that influence distort the facts or did it bring them into distinctness and focus? The admission that it both focussed and distorted would be a great step gained: the conviction that it focussed much more than it distorted might probably follow. There is weight, at this point, in the consideration that those who had come to recognise the Resurrection-value of the life of Jesus would jealously treasure its details. The preface of St Luke's Gospel is there to show that such jealousy for accurate narrative did actually follow. Nor would accuracy be the only result, but also intelligence.

Would the disciples of the Emmaus road, for example, in the frame of mind in which they started on their walk, have been likely to produce such a narrative as that of the Synoptists out of the tumble and turmoil in their memory of tentative impressions, half-understood sayings and doings, and baffled hopes? Would they have had the spirit to attempt it? The half-understood is the hardest thing to remember. But that which throws back the light of a found meaning quickens memory. Does not the impression made upon us by the Gospel narratives rather suggest that this is the sort of thing which happened in their making?

No doubt the question is one which might be answered in volumes of analysis. But the impression of the general reader is not without value.

I wish, however, to occupy what space remains to me with another consideration which is, I think, often overlooked.

If (1) the evidence is felt to raise any presumption of Divine Incarnation, and (2) the blessings of light and love which depend upon its truth are truly estimated—and without these two conditions I believe argument to be mainly futile—then I would strongly press that such a thing must be allowed to prescribe very largely its own conditions. We must be very imperfect judges of it. We may indeed claim that it should not violate our moral sense or conflict with our reason. But this is not the limit of what is demanded. It seems to be suggested that, if Jesus had been other and more comprehensive or adequate than He was, we might have had more ground for the homage which we pay to Him as Christ. But does the suggestion really bear to be explicitly drawn out? It is possible faintly to conceive of One who, within the short compass of human life, should have not only discoursed with final wisdom on the things of beauty, but worked the works of Pheidias with a perfection more ultimate and infinitely more various than his; should have achieved man's perpetual quest of a full and satisfying philosophy; should have exhibited a perfect acquaintance with

the properties and workings of nature which would have more than anticipated modern science; should have drawn out a perfect and detailed code of morality; and should have set out in lucid and inevitable beauty an order or a growth of social and political life. We may dream of some such magnificent possibility, contrast it with the few fragments of life and speech in the Gospels, and with what the Gospel account of Jesus suggests, and pronounce that it would have been far more worthy of Omniscience in human form. But with the very attempt to express our meaning the suggestion will begin to break down and give way. Such an Incarnation would surpass the containing power of hours and years, would utterly distract man's receiving faculty by surrounding the central truth with impassable mazes of departmental questioning and debate, and (the gravest matter of all) would utterly throw out of gear and order the course of man's natural efforts in knowledge and production. It would also lack the intense and specific moral power of the lowly appeal of One who came under our normal conditions in the way that Jesus did. Or, to put the same more briefly, if God could "humble Himself" to become man at all, is the added degree of humiliation implied in limitation probable or improbable? is the appearance of it an objection to its occurrence, and not rather a congenial sign that it truly occurred? We *know* this of the submission to suffering rather than to a royally and happily 'perfect' life. May we not presume it of submission to conditions of restricted activity and knowledge, and to the lack of an all-round complete development of human possibility? If not, the criticism in the January number of the Journal might be condensed within a nutshell in the following dilemma: an illimitable incarnation of God in man is impossible; a limited one is absurd. The dilemma is forcible: but do the nature of the subject and the stretch of our faculties admit of such a method? Is it quite congruous, or must we not pronounce it in a high degree presumptuous? Is not the subject one on which it is more likely to be right for us to receive than to dictate? Of course the argument

which I am urging has its moral limits. God could not 'stoop' to what was wrong, or to what was false. If, for example, Jesus is to be condemned because, in a saying which has historically been the charter of a new conception of the sanctity of marriage and of the dignity of woman, one Evangelist's version makes Him allow an exception for the man without reference to the corresponding case of the woman;¹ or if the absence of a condemnation of slavery by Him argues bluntness or defect of moral sense, then indeed the case is closed. But such criticism is as unconvincing as it is captious.

And within the wide limits of moral and rational rightness, how much room there is for assuming His acceptance of limitations from the particular local and temporal context, from the thought of the time, and from His viewing things through truly human eyes with a truly human mind! I well remember the emphasis with which Dean Church spoke to me of the impossibility that we should be able to understand or explain fully the union of the Divine and human natures. But I am not satisfied to reply to criticisms. I urge that any view is hopelessly one-sided and defective which does not take account of what is to me almost the greatest claim of the Incarnation to acceptance and to reverence, and perhaps the greatest miracle of all. I mean that, being so great, it came 'without observation'; that it entered the world without dislocating the world's course; that it heightens

¹ It is impossible in a sentence to do more than indicate the perverseness of the writer's reference to this subject. The case is that Jesus absolutely forbids divorce, and forbids it alike to man and woman. The First Gospel in one of its two passages on the matter introduces an exception, or, to speak more accurately, a case which He lays aside, and does this in terms of the man's treatment of the woman. Plainly it may be (1) that the parallel case of the woman would be meant to be implied, or (2) that the exception is an insertion which has come into the text from Jewish influence, or (3) that Jesus still "for the hardness of their hearts" made some sort of allowance for Jewish custom. But I am in truth reluctant to argue the point with one whom even courtesy to his neighbours might restrain from flinging such a word as 'iniquitous' against Jesus Christ.

and deepens all the values that were in the world before ; that it accomplishes at a stroke the human ideal, and yet leaves men room to accomplish in every sphere, in the moral and intellectual quite as much as in the material and mechanical ; that it is the perfect flower on the tree of life, and yet it is the seed-corn (or the leaven) of growths illimitable of human development. All this is easy to take for granted when it has been done and is familiar. It was unimaginable before. No time could have felt the necessity for this nearly so much as our own, with its infinitely enlarged horizon of time and space. None, I think, could have appreciated so well what I may call the moral delicacy of such a divine method. And while I trust that others will have handled the subject with far more of the weight given by learning and concentrated study, I do believe that in drawing special attention to this aspect of the matter I make a real contribution to its worthy discussion.

EDW. SOUTHWARK.

JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR.¹

PROFESSOR DR H. WEINEL.

THE conflict concerning Christianity and its significance for the present life of humanity is again entering a new phase. To those of our contemporaries who lead the advance church dogma is a thing of the past. With ever-increasing decision the theology of the last decades had been returning to Jesus and to the ideal which he brought into the world. In Germany it was especially the school of Albrecht Ritschl, in the persons of its two most important representatives, Harnack and Herrmann, who discovered again and again the essence of Christianity in the Gospel of Jesus, and proclaimed him as the supreme personal proof of God ; or rather as the man who, by his character and his deeds, convinces us in a unique manner of the truth of his own faith, and therewith of the truth of God's existence as the God of love. Their ideas had already penetrated deeply, not only into the more liberal theology of Germany, but into all departments of our science, and into all countries where scientific theology exists. And since the appearance of Harnack's *Wesen des Christenthums* and the rise of the great movement which attached itself to that book in Germany, these thoughts have been actively permeating the life of the people. The consequence was that a vigorous opposition sprang up on many sides. Pfarrer Kalthoff in Bremen opposed the general historicity of Jesus, while Edouard von Hartmann re-edited his criticism of New Testament Christianity, and vehemently attacked Jesus,

¹ Translation revised by the author.

believing that he was able to convict him at every step of inadequacy, both theoretic and scientific, moral and religious. Finally, those who are not theologians are beginning to proclaim with greater emphasis that an historical foundation for faith does not satisfy them; that a man of the past who can only be made intelligible by theological study can be for them neither the ideal for their present life, nor the source and basis of their faith. It is extremely interesting to us Germans to find that in England, also, critical voices, like that of Roberts' article, are being raised in opposition to our theology and to similar tendencies at home.

What have we to oppose to such criticism? Why do we maintain as firmly as ever that Jesus sets forth the essence of Christianity, or, in Roberts' words, "that he is Christ"? Why do we announce to the men of the twentieth century that salvation is to be found in none other as it may be found in him? A thoroughly sober historical view must be our justification.

I.

In the first place, it is not merely possible to prove that Jesus lived and was the founder of Christianity, but we can further ascertain, beyond all gainsaying, what was the inner content of his message. We can trace back the Christian tradition from the year 170, when the New Testament existed almost in the form now known to us, through the literature of the Apologists and the Apostolic Fathers. There we find not only the most essential sayings of our Lord attested, but also the letters of Paul. Of these First Corinthians and Romans at least (but also Hebrews) are authenticated in the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, which was written about the year 100. It is true that internal evidence against the genuineness of Paul's Epistles has been adduced, but without cogent reason. Their genuineness—at least in the case of Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians—is attested not only by their wonderful and incomparable originality and actuality, but especially by their theological content and by their

references to church conditions, or rather to pre-church conditions, which would have been simply impossible in the second century. In the letters of Paul not only is Jesus attested in general as an historical person—Paul was personally acquainted with his brothers, and in particular with James,—but they contain, further, the most essential features of his teaching. The “Eucharistic Formula” was by no means all that Paul knew. The words of Jesus echo everywhere in his letters, even though he does not everywhere explicitly quote Jesus, as in 1 Thess. iv. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 10, ix. 14—sayings of which only the second stands in our Gospels. What is most important to notice is that the essential import of the words of Jesus, and their essential import only, makes its appearance in critical passages of Paul’s writings: *e.g.* “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. vi. 2); “The whole law is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. v. 14). Further, in an important passage of Romans (xiii. 8) Paul has freely quoted this saying of our Lord, which by no means tallies with his own teaching concerning the law; and in other passages, where he is developing his ethical demands, he makes a significant application of Jesus’ words concerning the love of one’s enemies (xii. 9; xiv. 17). This corresponds completely with what Paul knew concerning the nature and character of Jesus,—his disinterestedness and self-devotion (Rom. xv. 2 ff.), his gentleness and benignity (2 Cor. x. 1), his love and humility (Phil. ii. 5 ff.). From these passages alone, which present only essential features, it will be clearly seen that we should know enough of Jesus from Paul, even if we did not possess the Gospels. That they so clearly establish the image which Paul had of Jesus is a sign of the soundness of our tradition. When Roberts calls attention to the fact that Paul, in his struggle for freedom from the Law, did not appeal to Jesus, the answer is that Jesus’ own attitude towards the Law was thoroughly conservative. He did not desire to abrogate the Law. The saying about the Sabbath in the passage quoted from Mark (ii. 27) is

probably not old enough, in any case not sufficiently concerned with first principles, to be successfully employed against such sayings of Jesus as Matt. v. 18 = Luke xvi. 17, and Matt. xxiii. 23 = Luke xi. 42. The question of the Law was precisely what Jesus left incomplete, his few genuine words about his mission to the Gentiles not being decisive. Matt. xxviii. 19 f. is most assuredly post-Pauline; while Matt. x. 5 and xv. 24 ff. = Mark vii. 27, tell more distinctly against Paul than Matt. viii. 11 = Luke xi. 28 tells on his behalf. From the content of our Gospels it thus becomes clear why, precisely in the great struggle of his life, Paul was unable to quote Jesus.

In comparison with the fact of such a tradition concerning Jesus no importance need be attached to the other fact, namely, that the non-Christian writers of his time do not mention him, that even Josephus himself passes him by; since at the moment when Roman history had to take account of Christianity, as Tacitus had to do when relating the burning of Rome, the name of Jesus is mentioned and acquaintance shown with his personality. And if it has to be admitted that Josephus really does not mention him—for it must be admitted there are important grounds for doubting the relevant passages in the modern text—he must have had some kind of reason for his silence. For the manner in which he speaks of John the Baptist and dresses him up as a Greek philosopher shows that this apologist of his own person and his country must be cautiously employed as a source.

The Gospels themselves are also attested by Paul and by the rest of the literature, which speaks much more frequently of Jesus, and knows more about him, than one would gather from the views of Roberts and Kalthoff. They are attested not merely as a whole, but also in the essential content of what they offer as the teaching of Jesus. Now it is true that the Gospels themselves have been subjected to incisive criticism, and if we add together all that has been declared to be spurious by recognised scholars—and not merely by dilettante writers like Kalthoff—hardly a single sentence of

them would be left standing. In particular, the most recent criticism of Wellhausen has turned out to be almost entirely negative. In his opinion we can form but a fragmentary idea of the teaching of Jesus, all that remains thoroughly genuine being the onslaughts upon the Pharisees and Sadducees in Mark ii., iii., vii., xi. and xii. "Moreover," says Wellhausen, "the Christian community has in like manner contributed a most important addition to the ethical teaching (*e.g.* the Sermon on the Mount), which is commonly regarded as holding good for the historical Jesus." It is impossible here to contest in detail, or even to characterise, the criticism of Wellhausen, which sacrifices not only the greatest part of the Sermon on the Mount, but those very sayings from the Logia-Source which have been regarded hitherto as the most genuine—including even the Lord's Prayer. But his criticism rests almost everywhere on bad foundations. It proceeds from an over-estimate of the Gospel of Mark. Nor does it follow the rule that we should explain as spurious only those things which *must* be explained from later conditions, from the time, and from the tendencies of the Christian community, and which at the same time *cannot* be understood of the historical Jesus. Instead of this, Wellhausen explains everything as spurious that *might* have arisen in any wise at a later date. Judged by this standard, every historical tradition which has remained oral for a long time and therefore become transformed by the thought of later generations, must be dismissed as spurious—*e.g.* the tradition of Buddha and Socrates. This is a matter which requires greater caution and patience. If we look at the tradition of Jesus as it really is we receive, on the contrary, a most favourable impression throughout. For of the four Evangelists three at least enable us to recognise that we have before us a genuine oral tradition. Their narratives proceed from the elements which in combination always characterise oral tradition, namely, sayings and anecdotes. And precisely these elements of oral tradition are the best means of retaining the memory of an historical person.

Sayings and narratives of small details reproduce the character of a man more readily than anything else would do; and it is by no means necessary to possess much of that kind of thing in order to identify a man completely and have a clear view of his meaning. One has only to recall, for example, the sayings of Lincoln and the stories about him related by Karl Schurz, or the way in which Carlyle characterises his heroes, Mirabeau or Danton, by means of little traits or turns of speech, in order to see how little of that kind suffices to cause the image of a man to stand out clearly before the eye of the mind. Let anybody once apply this to the Gospels, let him but once see Jesus clearly in any of his sayings, as that concerning the lilies of the field or his words about mammon, or any one of the parables; let him get but once a distinct impression of his love and tenderness towards the sinful woman, or his indignation against the Pharisees: and whoever does this will uphold me when I say, it is of no consequence at all whether we regard the whole or the greater part of the Gospels as genuine, whether we allow three years to his life or only one; we know Jesus, by means of these little stories and sayings, right well—as well as if we could see him still before us to-day and were able to hear his voice. Only, we must not indulge the wish to extract from his words a system, a dogma, a philosophy, but we must seek the human being—a man filled with love and benevolence, filled with grandeur and holy indignation, filled with purity and tenderness, filled with bitter scorn for all mean actions and selfishness. This man we find everywhere; in these little pictures we see him living before us.

II.

And what is the significance of this human being in the history of religion? As inquirers into the nature of Christianity, is it right that we should forget the mighty history of the last nineteen centuries in order that we may hear brief sayings and stories of Jesus; is it right that we put out of sight all the kings and priests, the popes and reformers, in

order that we may listen to his simple words? Or are we thereby going outside of history and mistakenly identifying the ideal Christ with the carpenter of Nazareth? Now, in my opinion, what we are thus doing is an historical matter-of-course. Were it our object to understand what Platonism is, we should not first interrogate all the Platonists and leave the Master on one side; if we would know what Buddhism is, we do not pass Buddha over, taking the religion named after him as our criterion; but we begin by asking—What did Plato teach, what did Buddha intend? and having got the answer to these questions, we take it as indicating the nature of the movement for which these names stand in the history of the world. And were we to discover that their pupils and all the later generations which are called after them had perverted the thoughts of their masters, changed them, added to them, and replaced them with alien ideas, we should then classify these accordingly, dividing them into genuine and spurious Platonists, and so forth. Nobody would regard this as other than a matter-of-course.

And further. Were it our aim to specify what Buddha or Plato signifies in the history of humanity, nobody would point his question at what they have in common with their time; we should rather exhibit what was original to them, and thus seek to determine their unique position in the history of mankind. Nor should we challenge them with questions which are not relevant to the particular province which was the scene of their endeavours; we should ask rather what precisely they accomplished in their life's work.

By these few considerations all the objections are removed which Roberts, with many others, has raised against our estimate of Jesus—objections based upon the fact that he shared the world-picture of his time, believed in devils and demons, in heaven and hell, and has been surpassed in many spheres of life by other men of genius. Most assuredly this is true; and if in the warmth of enthusiasm Jesus is now and then extravagantly described, as by Fairbairn, as the greatest

of all men in all respects, we can only say it is an exaggeration which ought not to be taken too seriously, and of a kind that is common everywhere. None the less may it be said that Jesus was an artist—that is, he was a poet of such force and greatness that his words are imperishably imprinted on the soul of everyone who has become acquainted with them, while his parables and his stories possess an imperishable life. But we must not exaggerate, and we must leave him his own peculiar work, which was to give humanity a new ideal and a new belief in God—the purest ideal and the loftiest belief.

But is not this also another exaggeration? Can it be actually proved? It can be proved on genuinely historical grounds, if we simply place the work and character of Jesus in contrast with the development of religion which preceded him. From such an historical standpoint we have only to take the sayings and parables of Jesus as a whole, and place this side by side with the Judaism which he found in existence, in order to see that he brought to its completion a process of development which culminated in him. His gospel is the full accomplishment of moral religion. He made an end of all the obscurity of the religion of the Law, in that he found the nature of the Good, not in the Law and its consequences, but in the inner disposition itself, and in that alone. What God forbids is not, in the first instance, murder and adultery, but hatred and every impure inclination; not perjury alone, but oath-taking in general; because Jesus condemns untruthfulness as that which gives the occasion to oaths, whether true or false. From this completion of morality in the inner disposition follows a second result; the requirement of God is something astonishingly simple, namely, love and purity; purity understood as freedom from covetousness and from deceit; as that resistance to temptation and complete sincerity which puts all calumny away with a smile, instead of seeking revenge and the punishment of the offender. An immense simplification is also to be found in the fact that everything of a ritual nature is eliminated

from the Divine requirement, since the one holy thing is a pure and loving disposition, while nothing is impure "which cometh into a man from without." Thus Jesus fully unfolded the implications of morality in all their purity, and brought to its end the line of development which the prophets had laid down in Israel and the philosophers in Greece. For the morality of Jesus thus unfolded is entirely inward, entirely at unity with itself; and it is purely moral, being free from every foreign motive. So that, even if Jesus "*knew nothing* of the world of Greek thought," he has, nevertheless, both fulfilled and surpassed the philosophy of Greece, so far as it is something more than mere scientific knowledge, so far, that is, as it created an ideal for life. Compare, for a moment, the ethic of Jesus with that, for example, of the Stoics, to which it often bears so near a verbal resemblance, especially in Seneca. Stoicism taught that man ought to help his fellow-men; but only by actual deed, forbidding the emotion of compassion and love. For the peace of his own soul, the Stoic must hold himself aloof from every emotion whatsoever. How cold-hearted and selfish does such an attitude appear to us!

It is asked—and Roberts has again strongly emphasised the question—was not the ethic of Jesus just as selfish? Did he not speak of rewards and punishments, and did he not prove false to the inwardness of his principle by founding his demands on these considerations? Here we come to the point which is the most difficult to understand, because it is here that we are most easily led astray by a consideration which remains upon the surface. Like the old prophets, Jesus came forth as a preacher of repentance, and, like them, availed himself of the usual instruments of prophetic appeal. The fire of his moral scorn drove him into violent menaces; it would be worse for Bethsaida than for Sodom and Gomorrah! And in just the same way he promised the peace of the Heavenly Kingdom and the fulness of its glory to all who were miserable and oppressed and who sighed for deliverance. But, once more, ought we to lay the emphasis on those features which he shared

with his contemporaries or with the older prophets? Is it fair to look at him exclusively from the point of view of his holy indignation and his warning utterances? Most assuredly not! For we must at once ask ourselves whether these external grounds of appeal can be quite harmonised with the elevation and inwardness of the demands which he made; whether such inward and complete morality could be born in a heart which aspired to the joys of a sensual heaven and at the same time was disturbed by the fear of hell? This negative proof is reinforced by the corresponding positive. We have only to test the moral demands of Jesus by the question, What is their active principle? and we shall soon discover that this is not the thought of reward and punishment, which indeed is bound up with them, but the inner abhorrence of evil and the attraction of the good, to both of which Jesus gave incomparable expression. What precisely is the active principle in the sayings adduced by Roberts from Matt. vi.? Does it lie in the fact that they conclude with the words, "Your Father will reward you openly"? Or should we not seek it far more in the wonderfully ironical descriptions of those who have their good deeds sounded by a trumpet in the streets or of those who disfigure their countenances when they fast; or of those self-righteous persons who profane the most inward act of the soul by offering their prayers at the street corners? "They have their reward"! says Jesus with grim irony. These are things we must feel, instead of simply taking the form of words and treating everything as of equal importance. What is original, what is impressive; passages in which the speaker is dominated by love—here, it must be granted, by bitter, contemptuous "love"—these are the things upon which all depends. Or, take any one of the parables, say that of the Prodigal Son. With wonderful art Jesus has here described the Father and his exceeding love—a love which borders closely on weakness when judged by ordinary human standards, but which takes us completely captive nevertheless; with subtle contrast he has put in the mouth of the brother the

claims of human, rational justice, which are far beneath Jesus and his God; and by means of the contrast he has put this "virtue" and "justice" so completely to shame that goodness and all-pardoning love appear to be things of self-evident nature. Are these pictures and motives the work of an egoist obsessed by the thought of reward and doing good from simple fear? No. Here, also, a genuinely historic view will have to confess, in conclusion, that the basis of the new requirements of Jesus is something entirely fresh—namely, another type of belief in God and another ideal for humanity.

The instant the moral requirement rises to such height and purity that it becomes essentially a demand for the good disposition, it is clear that ethics have reached a great turning-point in their development. For however the matter may stand related to the freedom of the will, it is certain that though a man can compel himself to do a good deed, the "thou oughtest" has no meaning in presence of the ideal of love or purity. I cannot command a disposition, nor reproach myself for its absence—to say nothing of an emotion. And Christian love always has in it an element of emotion, in spite of the opposite assertion of those moralists among us who have been influenced by philosophical, especially Stoic, ethics. For love, in the meaning of Jesus, rejoices in mankind, and is a feeling of value and trustfulness. That is a thing to which a man cannot apply the category of ought, nor will into existence. The same holds good of purity and of that sincerity which consists in inward strength and harmony. Here, also, the moral demand reaches a point of elevation so fine and lofty that it can no longer be considered as Duty. This is generally overlooked by philosophy. But when the moral demand becomes as deep as this there remain but two possibilities—a man must either despair in its presence, or, by a unique experience, he must become a new being, to whom morality has become a matter of course, as the flower and the fruit are to the tree. This experience is precisely that which a later Christianity has described as the New Birth and which Jesus

indicated by the words, "Repent, return ; be sorry for your sins (*μετανοεῖτε*)," and which he actually accomplished by his preaching. Whoever does not feel this love and purity as the inner vital force of his being, as Jesus did, must needs be shamed and attracted by the goodness of God, as Jesus proclaimed it, must needs be terrified by his warning and stimulated by his promise ; he must learn from Jesus himself, even as Peter and Zacchæus and the sinful woman did, what God is and what man is. For him Jesus proclaimed a God who makes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust. It is precisely this paradoxical goodness of God, which is higher than all justice, and his power, before which all things bow in deepest reverence—for we are all unprofitable servants—it is precisely these which bring it to pass that man, when overpowered by Divine greatness, goodness and holiness, becomes a new being amid the reproaches of his conscience and the rejoicing of his soul. For the grounds on which he becomes sure of the goodness of God are the very grounds on which he is compelled to condemn himself: God is love—the love which puts him to shame, but at the same time forgives him. That is the highest gift which Jesus offered to the world—the *religion of moral redemption*.¹ Man is redeemed from the moral demand as a foreign categorical "thou oughtest," while the moral life itself is conferred upon him through a complete conversion of the heart. Fear and sorrow vanish, while love extends itself even to the most utterly lost of mankind. It is the same with courage and inward sincerity, because the man now lives his life from God and has become a free lord of all things. So did Jesus live his own life in the first instance ; and in that life is contained the strength which is flowing forth from him down to the present day. And he who cannot define it scientifically may yet *feel* it in the sayings of Jesus, and in his whole attitude towards men, as revealed by the brief stories which have been preserved concerning him. Everybody may

¹ Die sittliche Erlösungsreligion.

feel this Divine inwardness and fulness, this certainty and clarity, this purity of a life wholly lived in God.

These last words explain why we cannot detach the person of Jesus from this ideal, as Roberts wishes, and as others have wished. This is no doctrine, but a life in God; it cannot be put into dogmatic statement, but merely described, or much rather felt; nor can it be handed down otherwise than in precisely these sayings and stories of a person. It can be attained only by seeing it lived out in a human life, especially in that of its first exponent. One of the earliest disciples of Jesus has quite correctly said that this life is like the wind: "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." Its seat is in the indefinable and subtle realm of personality, in the unconscious regions of the soul, which cannot be apprehended by theories and dogmas, but only by a spiritual experience. No matter how much of imperfection intermingles with it—Jesus himself said: "Why callest thou me good? None is good save God alone,"—provided only the summit-point of a human life is lit up by perfection, we are led captive by it more than by any doctrine in the world.

It is Jesus himself, and not an ideal that can be detached from him, who is the fulfiller of the moral religion of Judaism, which he developed to its uttermost and transformed into the religion of moral redemption. There is only one who has a place near to his in the history of religion—Buddha. Buddha offered to mankind the religion of deliverance from feeling,¹ as a means of rescue from the pain of existence. Polytheism also attained to a precisely similar point, at which it broke down in the same way as the religion of the Law. When the knowledge of nature goes yet deeper it everywhere slowly passes into pantheism, and men begin at the same time to recognise the inadequacy of the goods which the gods promise—eating, drinking, wife and child, home and palace, good fortune and success. These can yield men no lasting satisfaction, because all enjoyment is transitory, like the object by

¹ Die ästhetische Erlösungsreligion.

which it is produced. The longing for eternal good, for eternal blessedness, wakes into being. The ancient mystery-religions, which promised these things to the believer, broke up the religion of the State in the Roman empire. They all melted away into the stream of the world's history together with the gods which they worshipped, Mithras and Attis, Isis and Osiris. Long previous to this, Buddha in India and Plato almost simultaneously in the West had found a lasting way of salvation. If the world is a scene of sorrow, then flight from the world is the only way of escape. The salvation that Buddha offers is the last step upon this road. He bids man deliver himself by extinguishing the will to live, by becoming free from desire, because he has seen into the nothingness of everything in the world. The holy calm of the soul which has left behind all desire, all love and hate—this alone is the redemption of the world.

Jesus and Buddha are the two Saviours who compete to-day for the souls of men. No other way has yet been found. From time to time some teacher attempts a new path, as Nietzsche did not long ago amongst ourselves. But closely scrutinised the new way ever turns out to be one of the old. Nietzsche's ideal is derived from a state of culture prior to Jesus and prior to Buddha. In opposition to Jesus and Buddha he sets up the polytheistic man, the type of æsthetic culture in Greece and of the Renaissance in Europe. But were the human race able and willing to turn back and once more make an actual attempt to realise this ideal, the issue would always lead either to Buddha or to Jesus. That is to say, it would end either in seeing that every form of the self-centred life, even that of the highest and finest culture, gives a man no lasting satisfaction, but renders him unhappy, as Buddha recognised; or else there comes a light of knowledge which shows the selfish life to be repugnant, sinful and guilty, and man attains the conversion of which Jesus spoke. Then begins a new, joyful and vigorous life which comes forth from God and is spent in the service of love.

III.

By these historical considerations we are convinced that we are not dealing with an instance of a long-vanished past when we announce to our own generation that Jesus, a man who lived nineteen hundred years ago, is still the Redeemer and the Leader of mankind to God. Active as Buddhism is, and confidently as it preaches Buddha's mode of redemption, and certain as it is of finding followers and of saving souls, it is no less certain that Jesus also can be preached to-day with equal justification, without hesitation, and with the same success. This involves no confusion of the ideal and the historical person; for the one is nothing without the other. And it is no artificial mode of bringing the dead back to life; since no third ideal has yet been found which could be placed side by side with these two as a dominating force in human life. Between Buddha and Jesus the choice still lies even for the men of the present day. Not every one needs to be conscious of this when passing through the critical moments of his life; and yet the fact is as I have said.

It must be granted that the significance of Jesus has often been represented in a one-sided and exaggerated manner, and the attempt made to enforce reverence towards him by representing that apart from him there is nothing noble or great to be found in humanity. Yet there certainly is an element of truth in the saying of Augustine that the virtues of the heathen are only splendid vices. Because so far as there is an aristocratic motive behind even their highest precepts, these are not to be compared with the requirements of Jesus; for the humility of which his whole being was a sincere expression, and his love and devotion which seek not their own, grow out of that faith in God which, according to him, is the source of all that is good. At the same time it is equally certain that love is a natural gift of mankind, and that the entire history of humanity shows a progressive movement upwards towards the ideal which Jesus made perfect and realised. Everywhere we

behold the spirit of love arising in humanity, extending from the family to the clan, then embracing the nation, until at last man becomes a sacred object in the eye of man. We see it also developing its inner nature, justice and beneficence becoming love, which grows into an all-embracing temperament of love as exemplified by Jesus. Finally, we see justice and noble bearing even towards an enemy grow to their great consummation: "Love your enemies; bless those who curse you." There is no need to deny the development of humanity up to Jesus; nor need we overlook the continual growth and transformation of the ideal of love in human life which was accomplished before he arrived upon the scene. None the less must we admit the historical fact that the ideal appeared in him with an elevation never before attained and never since surpassed. To allege against him that the world has not yet wholly learnt to live according to his ideal, that even in his Church he has had wicked followers, that violent and base souls have been found even among the priests and the spiritual orders, is certainly unjust. Every ideal makes its way but slowly and in the face of serious drawbacks. But, in short, it is flatly impossible to use a theory of evolution for the purpose of finding fault with history. When Roberts says, "An evolutionary process starts from an undeveloped cell and by the pressure of environmental forces reaches the more fully developed stage . . .," it is appropriate to reply that history teaches that many revolutionary discoveries have been made once and for all, after which they have been merely filled in as to detail. I need only recall the achievements of the arts or the discoveries of natural science. And the ideals of humanity and the methods of redeeming men are discoveries. The latter, like the former, appear, when once made, so self-evident and easy, precisely because they are discoveries of the truth.

If, finally, it is objected to our announcement of Jesus as the Saviour and Leader of mankind to God that we are

thereby entangling simple laymen in theology, and that it is flatly impossible for those who are not theologians to take part in, and to examine, all this Biblical criticism and Gospel study, that we are robbing piety of its naturalness and simplicity—we reply that in all this there is a fundamental misunderstanding. We do not mean that the simple average man who desires to become acquainted with Jesus needs to tread the path of learned investigation. For it is precisely the greatness of Jesus, and the peculiarity of the tradition concerning him, that every one of his brief sayings and every one of his parables and of the stories concerning him displays his inner character entire, and displays it so clearly, that even the unlearned man may receive from it the deepest impression. When we require of the unlearned man that he should hear sermons and read the Gospels, we are certainly not requiring too much, or robbing his piety of its living reality. The Reformation made the same demand of men at a time when reading was far less common than it is to-day; and the Reformers were conscious of possessing a distinct advantage over the old Church, in that they were able to lead the Christian back to the original sources of his life. What was possible in those olden times is surely not too much to demand of our own age. And it is just here that we are able to advance another point. Let a man have heard but once the parable of the Good Samaritan, or of the Prodigal Son, or of the wicked servant, and may we not believe that, by means of one such passage, he may become well acquainted with Jesus, and entirely captivated by him? Is any further experience necessary beyond that of the goodness and purity, the sincerity and earnestness, which shine forth from these stories?

The strongest objection which can be alleged against the permanent significance of Jesus, and against the confession that he is our Saviour, is to point to the way his ethic was limited by the social conditions of his time and country. Much that has been brought forward in this connection is nothing but misunderstanding. A specific instance is what

Roberts says with reference to marriage and the position of woman.¹

Jesus did not leave us a complete system of social ethics which could be directly applied to the conditions of our own age. His words are intended for a band of resolute men who are to devote their lives as a sacrifice for the sake of God and of their fellow-men. This is the point of view from which most of his sayings are to be regarded; only when he is speaking with ordinary people of another type in regard to their needs—the question of marriage is just a case in point—does he express himself from a point of view which is universal. On this account an *immediate* application of his words is to be made only when we are placed in conflict, as he was, with an opposing world, a conflict where the necessity of immediate decision demanded complete self-sacrifice. But when we ask ourselves what, according to his ideal of love, sincerity, and purity, are the right lines to follow in our own time for the best ordering of the family, the state, human society and economic relationships, then we are naturally unable to apply his words directly, concluding, for example, that usury or divorce is now to be forbidden in the arrangements of the state, but we must apply our proper reason in order to derive from his ideal the requirements applicable to our own case. If the ideal is not to present itself as inadequate, there is only one thing that we are entitled to demand of it, which is, that it actually provide us with clear and straight lines of direction for furthering the interests of the life of the community. That the ideal of love does this, who can doubt? Indeed, who would deny that all the social demands of our age have grown out of the ideal of love, even though this ideal has here and there faded away into humanitarianism pure and simple?

H. WEINEL.

JENA.

¹ A passage in the original dealing with Mr Roberts' treatment of Mark x. 12 and Matt. vi. 24-34 is here omitted, the matter having been dealt with in a similar sense by Dr Drummond in the present volume and by Mr Chesterton and Professor Moulton in the HIBBERT JOURNAL for July 1909.—*Editorial Note.*

JESUS OR CHRIST?

A PRAGMATIST VIEW.

PROFESSOR PERCY GARDNER.

THE question raised by Mr Roberts is beyond doubt the fundamental question of modern Christianity. It is a question which it is exceedingly difficult to discuss, not only on account of its intrinsic perplexity, but because it is almost inseparably bound up with the strongest emotions of Christians, and their most real religious experiences. Yet, if it is discussed at all, it must be discussed with perfect frankness and thoroughness. Any half solution, any treatment which passes by the really important facts, is not only worthless, but worse than worthless.

Within a generation of the Crucifixion we find St Paul placing the human life of his Master between two periods of celestial exaltation. That was the beginning of Christology. And from that time onwards Christologic speculation has occupied many of the subtlest minds in the Church. Every age has made contributions to thought on the subject. It is sufficiently clear that an age like ours, restless, innovating, little given to accepting traditional views, must regard the matter in a fresh light, according to the new views in history and psychology which prevail among us.

Up to a certain point the statements of Mr Roberts seem to me not only true but incontrovertible. The picture drawn in the Synoptic Gospels is of one who partook in every way of human nature, and was bounded by human limitations. We are told of the sadness of Jesus, of his bitter indignation

against the Pharisees, of sudden moods of compassion, of anger, and of love. We know that he spoke, in the fashion of the day, of the Pentateuch as the work of Moses and of the Psalms as written by David. He regarded many or most diseases as the work of evil spirits invading human bodies. He spent nights in prayer to God. And in two passages at least, those which describe the scene at Gethsemane and the death on the cross, we have a vision of something like despair invading his soul, though his utter surrender to the Divine will appears undisturbed through all.

We must further remember that the three Gospels are not mere colourless biographies, but collections of such parts of the Christian tradition as most impressed a society which had already begun to seek in the life of its Founder traces of a more than human origin and nature. The human legend was not effaced, but it was supplemented here and there with incongruous elements. That Jesus cured the sick and cast out demons seems to be beyond question; but the more extraordinary marvels with which the life is brodered even in Mark are in many cases easily resolved into parable or legend, and in no case rest on any evidence which can be regarded as satisfactory. The miraculous birth is but a myth. The Resurrection stands on a different footing; and to that I must later return.

Those who read the Synoptic story of the life of Jesus in a non-natural way, and think that through it all he was conscious of supernatural power and knowledge, that he merely sojourned among men as one who properly belonged to another and a higher sphere, utterly deprive that story of meaning and of beauty. Take a single scene, that at Gethsemane. If the exquisitely touching words, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt," mean something quite different from that which lies on the surface of them, then the whole scene is a mockery. From the time of the Gnostics onwards there have always been Christians who have thought that they could show their piety by making the human life of the Master into a sort of

mirage, a show without underlying reality. At certain times in the history of the Church it has almost seemed as if the historic Jesus was about to disappear in a mist of theology. But in the long-run these tendencies have been put down as heretical, and the Church has insisted on the belief that after all her Master was a "perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

That there should be found in the three Gospels a few passages in which the perfect humanity of Jesus is obscured by words or deeds which have a different character need not in the least surprise us. In particular, the passage, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him," appears in Matthew and Luke like a patch of alien stuff in a garment. But seeing that at the time when the Gospels were written such sayings as these were common in the Church, as a consequence of the great changes originated by St Paul, it cannot surprise us that a few should make their way into the text. The Fourth Gospel, of course, is of a quite different texture. The author of it wrote with definite Christologic purpose. It is not really a biography, except here and there, but a doctrinal treatise. And although the author is one of the greatest theologians and mystics who have ever lived, the figure which he portrays is not a historic figure, not a living being, but an abstraction, save in some parts of the narrative, into which, as in the scene of the raising of Lazarus, the human element forces its way. "Jesus wept" is frankly humanist, but its adaptation to the context is very imperfect.

All this is obvious, and has been said many times before, and many writers have been content with the view thus reached. To history, they will conclude, Jesus of Nazareth is the last and greatest of the Hebrew prophets, the prince of ethical idealists, the most noble of martyrs, the most spiritual of thinkers.

But we have next to turn to another range of facts, facts

of history and facts of experience, which are as undeniable, and have as good a right to demand explanation, as those on which so far we have dwelt. And they are from the historic point of view even better attested. They begin with the Resurrection. Now, it is true that the accounts of the Resurrection in our Gospels are among the least satisfactory parts of them. We find no consistency, a mass of floating legends and of inconsistent statement. To compile out of the Gospels an account of the Resurrection which historic criticism could accept is a task which the wit of man has attempted, but in which it has not succeeded, and cannot hope to succeed.

But we have another and an infinitely more trustworthy source of information—the Epistles of St Paul. These are allowed on almost all hands to be genuine documents, and the earliest of the Christian documents which we possess. We can trust them as contemporary evidence. That is to say, we can trust them when they are contemporary evidence. When St Paul repeats the traditions handed on to him by the teachers and leaders of the Church as to the events of the life of his Master, and of his death and of what follows, his authority is limited. He is nearer to the events themselves than the Gospels. But on the other hand a mind like his was peculiarly liable to be influenced in the narrative of events by theological views. And he tells us in several places, more especially in the opening chapters of Galatians, that he does not regard the searching out of historic evidence as of any great importance. No one did at that time and in Judæa. Thus we must with respect examine, but not uncritically accept, what he tells us in regard to the history of Christianity before his time. But as regards his own life, and the phenomena of Christianity which came under his direct observation, he is as good an authority as we can have in regard to any events in ancient history.

The Pauline writings amply prove that in his time a most remarkable movement was taking place in the spirits of men. The writer of Acts describes it from one point of view when

he says¹ that it was a fulfilment of the prophecy in Joel, who foretold that in the last days God would pour forth His Spirit upon all flesh, finding an utterance in prophecy and marvels of all kinds. And certainly it is true that those little-understood psychical phenomena, such as speaking with tongues and faith-healing, which commonly accompany religious revivals, were abundantly present at the rise of Christianity. But that is nothing like a full account of the matter. These were but the outward signs of a vast spiritual revolution which went on in the souls of men. We can best judge of it from its working in the mind and heart of St Paul, though no doubt he was but one among many who felt the same enthusiasm. As a young man Paul had felt the urgency of the flood of the Spirit. At first the result had been hostility to, even persecution of, the Church. Then in a manner which is graphically described in Acts, but which he himself only describes in vague words, his line of defence was suddenly stormed, and he became not an enemy of the great movement but a devoted adherent of it, a "chosen vessel" to spread its power and influence from Antioch to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Corinth, from Corinth to Rome.

Paul felt within him the working of a new spiritual force which was dawning on the world. He saw how it was making both for righteousness and happiness. He was convinced that it was an embodiment and manifestation of the Divine life and purpose. He worked on its side against all opposition of men and of demons. And because it was a reality and not a mere fancy it "bore him onward through a life of shocks," it inspired and thrilled him, and made him a great prophet and teacher, a vehicle of Divine power and illumination.

Such inspiration acts primarily on the will. But it also imparts a wisdom which is not of the world, but which is of great power in the world. By a kind of insight rather than by a conscious intellectual process, the inspired teacher sees what

¹ The observation is put into the mouth of St Peter; we cannot say whether it is really due to him or to the historian (Acts ii. 17).

existing tendencies and forces can be yoked to the car of his enthusiasm. Often by a process as difficult to fathom as many of the processes which go on in the material world, he so works and writes that he influences future generations even more than his own. He seems to reach a point at which the evolution of the human race is freed from the process of succession, and becomes a complete whole, a rounded realisation of the idea of man, such as we imagine to exist in the Divine thought.

Thus the Pauline salvation by faith in Christ has been for more than eighteen hundred years one of the great possessions of humanity. It has given birth to theologies and philosophies, it has inspired churches and religious orders, it has clothed itself with numberless rites and customs, it has been embodied in lofty art of the architect, the painter, and the poet.

And Paul is but the most noteworthy example of a great group of men who were his contemporaries, and who felt in various ways the influx of spiritual revival. He was also the progenitor of a long line of Christian saints and heroes who have lived in the faith of Christ, and carried on in the world the propaganda begun by Paul. They have lived in conscious relation with a divine power, they have been members of a great spiritual communion, and they have all declared that this life had its source not in themselves, but in the divine spring of power and light which from age to age inspires the Christian Church, and makes it capable of redeeming the world from sense and sin.

Now, the first range of phenomena of which I have spoken is summed up in the word Jesus: the second range of phenomena is summed up in the word Christ. The existence of the Church has from the first depended on the possibility of bringing the two sets of facts into relation one with another. The Church is the Church of Jesus-Christ: and a lover of paradox might say that it is built upon a hyphen.

What then have been the ways in which the Christian society has brought together its historic founder and its

spiritual master and guide? There can be little doubt that the first bridge was the bridge of sight. However confused and inconsistent may be the accounts in the Gospels of the appearances of the risen Lord, there can be no doubt that the society believed such appearances to have taken place. No other cause can be suggested for the sudden change in the minds of the disciples from consternation and terror to confidence and boldness. And the well-known Pauline passage as to the witnesses to the Resurrection is as historic evidence of the belief of the first disciples unimpeachable. Paul himself claims with perfect confidence that he has seen the risen Lord, and received from him the commission in virtue of which he claimed the apostleship. Whether these visions were in the case of Paul rare or frequent we do not know: by what means he maintained the community of life between himself and his Master we do not know. We see the results, but we do not see the process.

Other visions of the risen Master are recorded in the Lucan account of the death of Stephen, and in the first chapter of the Apocalypse. But such visions cannot have been very frequent: Paul regards the privilege as a justification of his claim to the apostleship. And as they became more unusual in the Church, other and more spiritual modes of communication with the Master made their way, of which the chief since the first age has been the Christian communion. As to these the present is not a place to speak.

Even unlearned persons who read the New Testament with care are aware that the Christian enthusiasm in the nascent Church is spoken of sometimes as the result of an indwelling Christ; sometimes as the gift of the Holy Spirit. St Paul usually prefers the former way of speech; but he often speaks of the spiritual gifts in the Church as bestowed by the Holy Spirit: in fact, to him, the phrases "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Christ" seem to have exactly the same meaning. The Fourth Gospel dwells on the gift of the Spirit as an event to follow the departure of the Master: "If I go, I will

send him unto you." And in Acts we have in preference this way of describing the inspiration of the society. We have here abundance of ground for the exercise of that philosophic intellect whereby doctrine in the Church was evolved. But in the New Testament writers we scarcely find doctrine, not even, as I think, clearly formulated in the Pauline Epistles. We have rather phrases which embody sides or aspects of the spiritual experience of the Church, without much care to fit these phrases into any regular or articulated scheme of thought.

Thus, when the intellect of the first believers began to approach the question of the relation of the human Jesus to the heavenly Christ, we have a great variety of views. Paul dwells but slightly on the pre-existence of Christ: he speaks of his humbling himself and taking the form of a slave, and undergoing death, for which humiliation God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name. The author of Hebrews writes: "We see Jesus, who hath been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." And again: "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

The contribution of the Fourth Evangelist to the problem is a very momentous one, though it is summed up in a single word, the word *logos*. For, by relating the earthly life of Jesus to the Platonic system of thought which had been developing for centuries and occupied the whole mental horizon of the age, he furnished a starting-point for a series of Christian systems of philosophy. And by moulding the traditions of that life in accordance with the spiritual experience of the second generation of Christians, he reconciled in the manner of the time the historic and the experiential elements of Christianity.

In the first century of our era the problem of the relation of the historic Jesus to the exalted Christ, though important

and difficult, did not become acute, because the Church was conscious of her continuity of life. The apostles who had been the spectators and companions of the earthly life were the directors of the society, and the vehicles of the divine force in which it lived and had its being. St Paul was not in the same case, but, as we have already observed, he lived not only by faith in the risen Lord but also by sight of him. St Paul speaks of the self-humbling by which Christ entered upon the scene of the world as an event in the life of the historic Jesus, and we see no trace in his writings of any difficulty in uniting in thought the eternal with the temporal existence. But with time such a difficulty necessarily arose, driving the teachers of the Church into a maze of theory and of doctrine.

The three creeds accepted in the Anglican Church cannot be said to meet the difficulty. The Apostles' Creed is contented with a quasi-historic narrative of events, where the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his sitting on the right hand of God are spoken of together as if they were material facts of the same class. The Nicene Creed takes the same course, though in somewhat greater detail. The third or Athanasian Creed attempts an explanation; but the explanation really consists only in setting the two orders of facts, those of the historic life and those of the Christian experience, side by side. It asserts that Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man, consisting of soul and body, equal to the Father in respect of his Godhead, and inferior to the Father in respect of his manhood. How these inconsistencies can be reconciled it does not say. That creed is, in fact, a vast barricade of contradictions piled up to prevent the spirit of Christian philosophy from wandering into regions where it might lose its way.

There is in the creeds no trace of the doctrine of the *kenosis*, a doctrine built upon some simple words of St Paul, and held in a variety of forms probably by the great majority of thoughtful Christians—the teaching that on assuming a human existence the divine Christ emptied himself of the powers incompatible with it, laid them aside for a time, to

resume them on quitting the material world. I dare not say anything about a doctrine which has given birth to so many theories, and provoked so infinite a display of ingenuity. It has arisen, as doctrine usually arises, out of practical necessities, the needs of those who wished to represent to themselves in some intelligible fashion the unity of the historic Jesus and the divine Christ. Other basis it has none. There is no hint of it in the Gospels, even the Fourth, and it cannot be reconciled with the view of St Paul and the writer of Hebrews that it was after the suffering of death that Jesus Christ was exalted to the right hand of God, "becoming obedient unto death, wherefore also God highly exalted him." This is quite different from the resumption of a dignity for a time vacated.

However that be, it seems to me that the doctrine of the kenosis is exactly of the sort of metaphysical figment which the modern mind cannot assimilate, and that any teaching likely to be acceptable to modern Christians must have another aspect. What we want to know is what basis in fact and reality there is for the hyphen of which I have spoken. Is there a historic connection to be traced between the life of Jesus on earth and the life of Christ in the Church? It appears to me that such connection cannot be proved to a sceptic, for the historic data are insufficient, and may be interpreted in various ways. We cannot prove the spiritual resurrection as we can prove the assassination of Julius Cæsar or the beheading of Charles I. It must be accepted as an article of faith, not as the result of intellectual research.

It is in the nature of all faith—not Christian faith alone, but of faith in our fellow-men and in the divine government of the world—that though it has a basis of fact and experience, it strains beyond fact and experience into the realm of the ideal. Faith is not a passive faculty to listen and be convinced, but an active faculty, a tendency of the will which results in the furtherance and expansion of life. But though faith must needs go beyond fact, it is not independent of fact. If it is in collision with experience and reality it cannot persist.

Thus the real question which lies before modern Christians is not whether a continuity of spiritual power can be rigorously proved to run from the human life of Jesus on into the life of the Christian Church, but rather whether such a view can be reasonably held, whether it is in contradiction with the ascertained results of historic investigation. If not, then it is a sufficient basis for a reasonable faith, if faith is called for by Christian experience, and the demands of the higher life.

Any person who should maintain that history disproves such continuity of life would be a most arrogant dogmatist. We know more, much more, in regard to our psychical conditions and spiritual surroundings than did our fathers. But yet our knowledge is strictly limited. It certainly behoves us, in dealing with such subjects as inspiration, divine action in history, the nature of the world of spirits to which we belong as members, to speak with extreme caution. Above all things, to make dogmatic denials where evidence is defective, is certainly not the part either of a wise man or of a really scientific man.

Take them as we will, the facts of early Christianity are of a most surprising, unparalleled character. Such facts as it offers are so unusual that no one save a shallow sciolist would be ready with a cut-and-dried explanation of them. There is the astonishing life of the Master, which has impressed many who were not professed Christians with an admiration almost beyond expression. There is the wonderful change which came over the Apostles after the time of the Crucifixion, transforming them from timid and half-appreciative disciples into bold and effective missionaries of the faith. There is the rapid spread of the new doctrine, in the face of bitter hostility and persecution. There is the remarkable ethical similarity between the teaching of Paul and that of his Master, while at the same time in his hands the Christian teaching undergoes a prodigious development, becoming fit not for an obscure sect of Jews, but for the great cities of the Greek world. These and many other such historic phenomena seem to me to be

only explicable by the supposition that a mighty spiritual power of a new kind and of greatly superior force was dawning on the world, a power not easily to be accounted for, yet in all things to be taken into account.

I do not think that historic investigation can reach much more definite results than these ; science is bound to be largely agnostic. But we have thus a platform on which Christian faith may well erect a house of faith. If the faith be expressed in the philosophic form of doctrine, that doctrine will want frequent revisal and renewing. But the inner spirit persists. The tree throws out flowers and fruit according to the season, but the root remains fixed in the ground, drawing its life from the permanent forces of nature.

It is a fatal aberration to make the human life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels in any way unreal : we must be content to see in them the memorials of a human life, but without sin, and governed by a unity of will with the divine purposes which makes it quite unique. Yet we in no way transgress the canons of reason and of history if we connect that life with the outpouring of a fresh tide of spiritual life upon the world, which took form in the perpetuation of the spirit and the obedience of Jesus in the inspiration of the Christian Church. He who came to the earth as Jesus has dwelt there to our days as Christ. The Christian consciousness of our day is one with the consciousness which has set apart the followers of Christ from the world since the day when the Apostles first realised that though their Master was hidden from sight he was with them until the end of the world.

And when contemporary Christians claim that they, like St Paul, have learned to live in communion with, and in dependence upon, the heavenly Christ, we are compelled to take the claim seriously. No doubt it may often be a form of self-delusion : in these matters it is very difficult to find a touchstone which will differentiate the real from the fanciful. The only really trustworthy test is that set forth by the

Master himself, the test of fruits. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The fruits must be tested by the facts of life and the ideal aspirations of mankind. But Christian history abundantly shows the working of a divine power through the consciousness of the leaders of the Church.

But when men are conscious of inspiration they are often in a state of revolt against the philosophic temper and the scientific attitude of mind. They make assertions which can be tested in the courts of reason, and which may be found wanting. For example, Dr Dale, in his remarkable work on *The Living Christ*, maintains that we are justified in arguing from the sacred facts of the Christian consciousness to historic views as to the life of Jesus on earth. It would be rash entirely to reject such processes of thought. But so far as they may have value, the value is a subjective one. Objective and scientific history could never admit among its methods one which cannot be tested, and may lead to most incongruous results. But conduct is a more important element in life than exact or scientific knowledge; and the needs of conduct lead, in the case of those whose education is less thorough, to many opinions with which we need have no quarrel, unless they claim objective and universal validity. Probably to many Christians of our own day some form of the kenotic theory may be a great spiritual boon, though it appears to me that that type of theory is somewhat out of date, and is likely to recede in the Church. And the crude formula of the unintellectual Christian, "Jesus is God," however it may offend the philosopher and jar upon the learned theologian, may be for many the direct expression of spiritual experience.

Thus it appears that the views expressed by Mr Roberts, though in a measure undeniably true, yet require much supplement before they can commend themselves to Christian thought. He dwells upon one side of a problem which has more sides than one. I quite agree with him in thinking that it is a mistake to obscure the perfect humanity of Jesus, and his limitations in knowledge and in outlook. But he does not

seem fully to appreciate the reasons of a tendency which is very natural, a tendency which must be met, needs which must be satisfied in the interests of the Christian life. Not to go outside England, let us take as examples such movements as the Salvation Army and the Student Christian movement. Could they have succeeded as they have succeeded if they had not drawn on divine stores of spiritual power? And is not the source of that power the same source whence for eighteen centuries has come the vitality of the Christian Church?

But though the power is the same, I do not think that the old explanations of it will satisfy the modern spirit. We have too completely changed our intellectual horizon. Some recent words of Professor William James may serve as a warning:¹ "The theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of the world, its creation out of nothing, its juridical morality and eschatology, its relish for rewards and punishments, its treatment of God as an external contriver, an 'intelligent and moral governor,' sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish savage religion." But the question what we are to put in the place of an outworn theology is no light one, nor can I approach it at the end of a critical paper. It is to be hoped that some of the papers included in this volume may be suggestive in this direction.

PERCY GARDNER.

OXFORD.

¹ *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 29.

only a faith that leads to action, professes &
improvement has any power to win men &
their support -
P.G.

THE CHRIST OF THEOLOGY AND THE JESUS OF HISTORY.¹

PROFESSOR DR PAUL WILH. SCHMIEDEL,

Zürich.

THE problem contained in the question "Jesus or Christ?" has not been developed by Roberts in its full extent. All that he advances against the defenders of the Deity of Christ is necessary, and is valuable as pointing out to them the limitations of the personality of the historical Jesus which they do not see, or as convicting them of the inconsequence which they incur when they do recognise them. And I have no doubt that the acceptance of the Deity of Christ in England is sufficiently prevalent to justify a writer like Roberts in directing his polemic exclusively against this doctrine. But perhaps it may be not without interest if, as one of the few Continental contributors to this volume, I introduce, into the scope of the inquiry, a reference to the state of the question in Germany, my fatherland, and in Switzerland, where I have now laboured for more than sixteen years.

A rigid orthodoxy, thoroughly resembling its English equivalent, naturally exists here also. In its ranks, however, and still more in the ranks of the theology of compromise,² the attempt to keep the person of Jesus human, in one sense or another, is more and more in evidence. It is not in the manifestation by Jesus of omnipotence, of omniscience, and

¹ Translation revised by the author.

² Vermittlungstheologie.

other exclusively divine attributes that the chief source of satisfaction is found, but rather in his moral perfections, his sinlessness (whereby it is emphatically indicated that Jesus was fully exposed to temptation), and further, his saving love, his eagerness to help in bodily and spiritual need. Side by side with this, however, stands an outspokenly free-thinking theology, to which it is not for an instant doubtful that Jesus must be considered as man in the full sense of the term, and that anything divine may be sought in him only under the condition that his humanity is not put in question.

At first sight it might appear as though the question "Jesus or Christ?" did not exist for the last-named tendency. Strictly speaking, however, the question no longer retains its first form—(1) Was the historical Jesus also Very God of Very God? but assumes a second form leading to a third, (2) Was he also the bringer of all that is valuable in the progress of humanity? or (3) Was he at least the bringer of the perfect religion? If either of these last two questions is answered in the affirmative, there follows at once a fourth question: (4) is he, on that account, entitled to veneration in worship and otherwise? It would be an error to treat this new threefold question as having no connection with the first. Roberts himself has included it in the problem as handled by him, since by the Christ, whose identity with the Jesus of history he denies, he understands not merely the Second Person of the Godhead, but also the active principle of human progress, the ideal which is being ever more fully realised along the path of evolution; and (p. 281) he begins to discuss the second of these questions with Carpenter.

Thus we shall have to keep all the forms of the question in mind if we are to be just to the full compass of the problem. And it will be hard to find a problem of theology which so sorely needs and fully deserves an all-round treatment as that which lies before us. What Roberts has described is a calamity from which all Christendom is suffering; indeed, Roberts' article might be described as a cry of need. Nothing can be

gained by shutting one's ears any longer ; the matter must be firmly taken in hand, and that with all the rigour of principle, but at the same time with perfect calm, and regard for objective fact, *sine irâ et studio*.

I.

To the attainment of this calm, nothing is more conducive than insight into the fact that the calamity has arisen as an historical necessity, and could not have been avoided by any means whatsoever. It is almost as old as Christianity. When Jesus walked upon the earth, his followers, in spite of their veneration for him, certainly regarded him as a man. But it was otherwise after they had come to believe that he had been raised up into heaven. Those especially who came to believe in him at a later date, without having seen him during his earthly life, never learnt to regard him otherwise than as a Being sitting at the right hand of God, and destined to return upon the clouds of heaven. Already Paul ascribed to him a life in heaven before his life on earth, as well as a part in the guiding control of the fate of the Old Testament people (1 Cor. x. 4, 9), and, in all probability, also a part in the creation of the world (1 Cor. viii. 6). The doctrine of his self-emptying, which Roberts rightly finds it impossible to accept, was therefore quite inevitable if Jesus was to be introduced upon earth as a real man, a point to which Paul held fast. But equally unacceptable is the doctrine opposed to the Kenosis, which first finds expression in the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 9), and was afterwards developed in the Fourth Gospel—the doctrine that in him the entire fullness of the Godhead had dwelt bodily.

Already in the second and third centuries there was no want of reaction against all this. Faithful adherents of the Church, like the Alogi, as they were first called by Epiphanius (d. 403), and Gaius of Rome, denied the genuineness of the Johannine gospel, and even ascribed it to the heretic Cerinthus ; while the Ebionites—the followers of

those among whom memories of the actual life of Jesus upon earth had been preserved — explained Jesus as a mere man. Among the Monarchians, again, who were determined to avoid in every form the conception of a second God, one party declared that Jesus had been a man who differed from others merely by reason of his being endowed with divine power. This mode of comprehending Jesus is expressed in the Bible with noteworthy clearness in Acts (x. 38); and further, it must not be forgotten that the Epistle of James defends a form of Christianity in which the person of Jesus plays practically no part.

But the history of dogma teaches us yet a further lesson. It shows that statements concerning the Saviour by no means invariably arose from a view of his person, but were only too often made in the service of quite different interests; whence it is no matter of surprise if they deviate entirely from a scientifically adequate conception of Jesus. The Gnostics needed a divine messenger who should remind the human soul, which comes forth from God, of its divine origin, in order to liberate it from its prison—the body; consequently Christ must have been the bringer of these tidings. The apologists of the second century had a philosophic interest in explaining the creation of the world and the divine revelation; wherefore Christ must have been the instrument of the creation, and the instrument of the revelation—not, however, the first merely, but with the majority of them also the second—without his needing to become man; thus they attached little value to his humanity. Men who had died before the advent of Jesus had had no opportunity to hear the preaching of salvation, wherefore Jesus must have brought it to them in the under-world; though, according to 1 Peter iii. 19 f., it was only offered to the contemporaries of Noah, because the author of the epistle happens to base his argument on a passage in the book of Enoch (x. 11–14). But since the idea of Jesus preaching in the under-world appeared too fantastic in the eyes of many theologians, they explained the passage in

Peter as though Christ had preached before his incarnation to the men of the Old Testament times who were still alive, and only afterwards arrived in the under-world; while Lutheran orthodoxy saw in the descent of Jesus into the under-world a triumphal progress, in the course of which he merely announced to the damned by his preaching—quite in the spirit of the dogmatic ruggedness of later Lutheranism—the eternal continuance of their damnation. The second party among the Monarchians, who did not regard Jesus merely as a man endowed with divine power, and yet were resolute to maintain the unity of God, held that the Father Himself had appeared on earth in the person of Jesus, and had even suffered on the cross (Patripassianism). Among the theologians of modern times Luther and a number of his followers come nearest to the Patripassians. According to this view, God was suckled; he walked and fell down; he ate, drank, felt cold, suffered pain; and for the three days between his crucifixion and his resurrection these ideas found expression in the following verse of a Church hymn:

O grosse Noth,
Gott selbst ist tot.

Conversely, Christ, while in the manger, on the cross, and in the grave, ruled heaven and earth with omnipotent sway. This conception was strictly necessary for Luther if he would carry out his view of the Lord's Supper—a view which was for him an actual religious need. According to it, the flesh and blood of Christ is partaken at every celebration of the Lord's Supper in a real (though also in a supernatural) manner; whence the body of the risen Christ must participate in the Divine Omnipresence. Finally, mention must be made of the theory that the advent of Jesus upon earth would also have become necessary even if humanity had never fallen into sin. According to this, his task consists in bringing to view the archetype of humanity in its unimpaired vigour, so that this may work out in history, which thus proceeds in its development to the goal of a perfected human race. It is easy to see

how different is the conception of such a Christ from what it would be if other assumptions were made concerning the purpose of his divine mission, and how little it is to be expected that any conception of him formed on so dogmatic a method will correspond with the demands of science.

There remains yet a third conclusion to be drawn from the typical form of the Church Christ-idea. It is not the Confession of Nicæa, in the year 325, with its formula "Very God of Very God," that contains the most adequate expression of ecclesiastical Christology, but rather the conclusion of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Christ is Very God, and at the same time Very Man, of reasonable soul and body consisting, like to ourselves in all things save in sin, possessing the divine and the human nature unconfounded, neither being changed into the other, but each inseparable and undistinguished from the other. It is obvious from this that the Church doctrine is by no means exclusively concerned with the Godhead of Christ, but just as much with his humanity; and this assuredly was not the consequence of a mere process of thought, but had for its basis an actual religious need. Christ has to be the Saviour. That is what a mere man cannot be; but neither can a mere God; the Saviour, as God, must surpass mankind, and at the same time he must, as man, resemble men, in order that he may be able to share their feelings. Thus here also the ruling factor is still a genuine human sentiment, as we find it expressed in Biblical language in Hebrews ii. 17 and iv. 15.

The history of dogma shows how earnest the Church was in dealing with these matters. Indeed, the Monophysites merely drew a conclusion from the premises of Church doctrine when they met the demand for a conception of Christ as a unitary being by upholding the deification of his human nature; but their doctrine was condemned because it surrendered the true humanity of Christ. Certainly it was a well-meant and well-considered attempt in the same direction when Apollinaris taught that the place of the human soul in Christ had been occupied by the divine Logos, and, to judge

from Romans i. 3 f., Paul would probably have declared on his behalf; but he had to be condemned because he disavowed the human soul in Christ. Equally in the interest of the unity of the person of Christ it must, indeed, have appeared strictly necessary to suppose that he possessed only a single will—naturally the divine will; and to this Monothelite doctrine even a Pope of Rome has given his adhesion. But, by so doing, he gave in advance the lie direct to the dogma of the Vatican Council of 1870, which declares a pope to be always infallible in every doctrinal decision given officially *ex cathedra*; for this Monothelite doctrine had to be condemned on the ground that it curtailed the human nature of Christ.

Why do we linger so long over these fruitless controversies of a distant past? Because they show that movements of a by no means entirely harmful nature were being fulfilled in them. Motives are at work in them to which even Roberts will not refuse his sympathy. And the further we go back into the beginnings of Christianity, the more must we recognise that the effort to rank Jesus on an equality with God was a noble effort, and a natural expression of the value which was attached to the Christian religion. The blessings which it brought were received, it is true, from God; but they were received through Christ, and thus gratitude and veneration were also directed towards him. Paul makes him, in the first stage, an instrument in the hand of God (Rom. iii. 25, viii. 32); and yet Paul cannot avoid ascribing grace to Christ himself (2 Cor. viii. 9). It is a very serious question whether we to-day should possess Christianity at all if Jesus had not been interpreted as a divine being. In any case, this presentation of Christ, which corresponded to heathen modes of conceiving the gods and the sons of the gods, has greatly contributed to the diffusion of Christianity. Thus it was in its own time a source of many blessings, and for that very reason if for no other we ought to be ready to pass a just estimate on the unfavourable after-results which it is producing to-day.

On no account, however, must this be taken as involving

a confession that we must consider ourselves obliged to tolerate these results as they exist in our own time and place. On the contrary, the more willingly we recognise that the aforesaid presentation of Christ was necessary for a certain period of history, the better is our position for exactly determining the end of that period. Its end began to come—at least for the great majority of Protestant Christians—at the time of the *Aufklärung* in the eighteenth century. At that time men were so vigorously occupied with the question as to what was psychologically possible and impossible, that a conviction which previously had caught the attention only of individuals here and there made an impression on ever wider circles of the people, and this has continued to the present day. Both in their thought and—let it be remembered—in their religious experience men feel that violence is being done to them by the demand that they should embrace the idea of a perfect God and a perfect Man as united in the one and indivisible person of a Saviour whom they are longing to revere. And it is simply impossible for them to submit to this demand any longer.

But if the question is asked as to the most effectual means of making good the justice of this protest, we may be allowed to borrow from the history of dogma a last corroboration. The most effectual means for the purpose is the history of dogma itself. By nothing can the impossibility of satisfying the demand be more plainly proved than by the endless succession of attempts which have been made to satisfy it. The saying of David Strauss should never be forgotten: "Subjective criticism proceeding from a single person is a water-pipe which any boy can stop up for a time with his hand; but criticism as it realises objective results in the course of centuries rushes forward like a foaming river, against which all sluices and dams are unavailing."

The result we have attained now shows us also the way upon which we must continue to advance. Since the divine and the human nature cannot be united in Jesus, and since Jesus was undoubtedly man, we have simply to regard his

human nature as given, and to ask, as we have already formulated the question,—Was he at the same time the bringer of all that is valuable in the progress of humanity ; or was he, at least, the bringer of the perfect religion and the Saviour of the world, and on these grounds entitled to worship ?

II.

Here it becomes plain from the outset that it would be hardly less difficult to derive from him the true progress of humanity in all the provinces of life than it would be to regard him as Very God. It needs no demonstration that most provinces of human culture were closed to him ; indeed, in regard to many of them he would not have been in a position to estimate their value, even if he had been acquainted with them. It may be roundly stated that his greatness consisted in his one-sidedness—a characteristic which he shares in common with many leaders of mankind. Statements like those quoted by Roberts, “he alone gives meaning to philosophy, direction and purpose to history,” etc., can only be—I do not say endorsed, but—discussed at all when their meaning is understood to be this : the religion which Jesus introduced is of such central significance for mankind that all philosophy must take its bearings therefrom, and all history derive its movement from the religious impulse.

III.

Thus we must limit ourselves entirely to religion and ethics if we would prosecute our inquiry whether something of universal validity and unconditional value can be found in Jesus as a being subject in all respects to human limitations. To separate the ethics of Jesus from his religion is impossible, for the only religion he approved was that which verified itself in moral action, and the only ethic that which consists in the fulfilment of the Divine Will, and as such proceeds from religion.

The first question to ask is now as follows : Whether Jesus

on this limited field evinced an absolute perfection in his own person, *i.e.* whether he was sinless? If the position that he was man be accepted without reserve, the above question takes the following form: Can a man be sinless? Proceeding with the extreme of caution, we can give an absolute negative to this question only if the doctrine of original sin be assumed from the outset. But even if this doctrine is left out of view, it must be said, on the strength of all observation both of other men and of oneself, that it would be hazardous in the extreme to pin one's faith to the sinlessness of a man. As far as Jesus is concerned, it is certain that all the writers of the New Testament assumed his sinlessness, even though they speak of it with remarkable infrequency. But we are surely not at liberty to see a proof in this aspect of the matter when we consider the attitude of veneration in which they stood towards him, and the kind of being whom they held him to be. Nor can we regard the passage in the Fourth Gospel (viii. 46) as an expression of Jesus himself, in view of the character of the book in which it stands. All the more importance attaches to Mark x. 18: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good save God." It is true that philologists are now proving with much zeal that the original Aramaic word means "gracious";¹ but they do not reflect that Jesus cannot have justly regarded himself as morally good if he repudiated even the epithet "gracious."

The only argument that might be taken into serious consideration, as confirming his sinlessness, is his feeling of unity with God, without which he would not have been able to regard himself as God's Son and messenger. But here our own experience teaches us that the consciousness of sonship to God is not removed by a lapse into sin, provided only there is an earnest will to return from the state of separation from God into reunion with him; and we may certainly assume that this was the case with Jesus in a pre-eminent manner. His consciousness, however, of being the messenger of God did

¹ "Gütig." The sense is the same in Mt. xx. 15; 1 Peter ii. 3.

not rest upon the ground of his own personal condition, but upon that of a divine errand. This contained, in fact, the strict necessity of remaining, on the moral field, in perpetual harmony with the will of God ; at the same time Jesus would not have had the feeling that his mission was withdrawn from him unless sin had kept him for some length of time removed from the face of his Father.

After dealing with the question whether the sinlessness of Jesus was an actual fact, we must next examine the interest which it has for us. On this point an enormous difference of view comes to light. What the New Testament and the doctrine of the Church seek in the sinless Jesus is, in one part, the Sacrificial Lamb for the expiation of sin, which the Old Testament required to be without spot or blemish ; and in another part, the Divine Being come down to earth ; while a theory which has arisen in modern times expects to find in him a man who was exposed to sin and yet overcame it, and trusts, only by such a mode of regarding Jesus, to find strength and impulse for the effort needed to attain the same goal. Nevertheless this theory, as a rule, regards Jesus, through the peculiar nature of his person, as more fully equipped than others are with power to resist sin ; and thus, even if one were able to believe in his sinlessness, his example would not have efficacious value. Meanwhile, in spite of this negative result, it still remains quite possible to give an affirmative answer to our principal question. For Jesus might still introduce infinite blessings into the world without his having personally realised the ideal of moral perfection.

But in order that he might bring an element of unconditional value into the world, must he not be its Redeemer ? Before we can deal with this question we must first know what is to be understood by the term "Redeemer." It would be entirely one-sided to think exclusively of the redemption from the guilt of past sins which Jesus is supposed to have brought by his sacrificial death. Equally necessary, of course, is redemption from the inclination to the continuance of sin ;

and, as a matter of fact, such redemption also was found by New Testament writers in the death of Jesus (*cf.* my *Johannine Writings*, London, A. & C. Black, 1908, p. 275 f.). But, however exclusively redemption is sought in the field of religion and morality, man needs it also in regard to other things than sin. Speaking summarily, it may be said that Jesus brought redemption from the error of a religion of servility and from the error of a religion of pretensions,¹ as the latter is portrayed by the Pharisee of the parable in contrast with the Publican; he redeemed men also from the sin of loving the world and from the sin of egoism. In the first of these four points, forgiveness for past sin is included; not, however, through the sacrificial death, which Jesus did not take into consideration at all, but through the revelation of a God whose nature is indicated in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Consequently, forgiveness of sins through God was not effected by Jesus, but only revealed. The second form of redemption was brought about by Jesus through the emphasis he laid on humility, in which remorse is included, and the readiness to reform, as it finds expression in the person of the Prodigal Son. The third rests upon such thoughts as these: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"; "What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Matt. vi. 33, xvi. 26). The fourth is derived from the reflection, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it" (Matt. xvi. 25).

Thus the saving power of Jesus consists not so much in his performance of specific deeds as in his making ideas efficacious in life. That ideas were thus made by him into active powers was owing in a high degree to his example and his entire personality, as well as to his words. No less was it owing to his death, in so far as he thereby showed himself willing to champion his cause by suffering martyrdom for its sake, and not merely to proclaim it before the world as a Teacher. And not the least of the causes contributory to the same result was

¹ "Anspruchsreligion."

the circumstance that his tragic fate thrust him into the light of the world's history, and that the faith of his followers transported him into heaven as a Divine Being. Not till then did he become the head of a religious community which was able to commence its march of triumph over the earth.

If it be the case that his ideas were not new, little harm will be done to the significance of his life's work by admitting the fact. It is remarkable how differently the various theological tendencies bear on this point. According to strict orthodoxy, Jesus is allowed to have introduced nothing at all that is new, except so far as he fulfilled the predictions of the Old Testament; for orthodoxy does not admit that the Old Testament is of less value, as revelation, than the New. But the more the Godhead of Jesus, the miracles, and the sacrificial death are surrendered, the more pressing becomes the demand that his ideas must have been new without qualification, otherwise the value of his life's achievement appears in danger of gradually dwindling towards zero—as though people could not be perfectly content with regarding Jesus as endowed with a power of giving life and efficacy to old ideas, which, in spite of their truth, had not as yet become working forces in the world. In that case his achievement would be precisely this: truths which hitherto had been uttered here and there, and proclaimed without result—for example, the ideas of the Old Testament prophets—he seized upon with the entire strength of his personality and, bringing its full force to bear upon them, made them active powers in life.

But now, how stands the question of the permanent value of that which Jesus introduced? As far as his ethic is concerned, I have briefly stated what I think on the subject in my little book, *Jesus in Modern Criticism* (London, A. & C. Black, 1907), and have there gone into the matter with sufficient thoroughness to render it superfluous that I should claim the pages of this Journal for a repetition of my views. Let the reader bear with me if I touch upon only a few of the points raised by Roberts.

So far as we know, Jesus did not condemn "the fiscal oppressions and land monopolies of his time." As little did he denounce "the harsh and cruel law of debtor and creditor," or "the iniquitous principle of sex-inferiority as against woman" (pp. 277-8). This becomes intelligible to me on the assumption that his glance was exclusively directed to the piety of the individual soul, in which precisely lay the strength of his appeal, and not upon the improvement of social conditions. And yet we must ask the question, Whence did Paul derive the strength which enabled him to completely transcend the view of "sex-inferiority" (Gal. iii. 28) if not from the principles of Jesus? Whence did the Church of a later date derive the strength to resist the other two institutions named above, and much else of the same sort, as it did whenever the courage to do so was not wanting? Whence came the strength to attack slavery also, which Paul had left unchallenged? It is unfortunately true that the Church did this at a late date in its history, and its efforts had already been widely anticipated by non-Christian philanthropy in the age of the Roman emperors. But this in nowise detracts from the inner value of the principles of Jesus. It only shows that these principles, in spite of (or on account of?) their essentially religious character, coincided with the general line of human advance; and that, surely, is no blemish. As far as slavery is concerned, the view of it taken by Paul and his followers, too exclusively religious and wanting in humanity as it was, may even be said to have been a great blessing; for if Christianity had announced a general emancipation of the slaves, the result might have been an extremely violent setback, which would have imperilled the entire existence of the new religion. But the principles which made it impossible to retain slavery were implicit in Christianity from the first.

This touches upon the point which I should like to advance concerning Roberts' criticism of Carpenter's statement (p. 281): "His principles far transcended the moulds which the time provided." I consider this statement to be entirely correct

if we keep in view the fact that it refers exclusively to first principles, *e.g.* to love, or to the worth of the human soul before God, or to the passage quoted above (Matt. xvi. 26), beyond which, as I have tried to prove in my book, no ethic, however modern, provided only it insists on the demand for an earnest moral life, has ever been able to advance. I differ from Roberts in that I do not require, as he does against Carpenter, that such a principle, if we are to regard it as transcending "the moulds of the time," ought to have been immediately unfolded by Jesus himself in the full compass of its consequences. It appears to me that the study of spiritual history teaches that a first principle often requires a very long time in order that it may disclose its full implications. Its inner value is, however, none the less on that account.

Apart from the ethic of Jesus, we must devote a few words to his fundamental religious ideas, taking "religious" in the narrow sense. There is no doubt that his making the conception of God as the Father, which indeed was not new, the central point of his religion, was a fact of the greatest importance. At the same time, we must carefully guard ourselves from attaching a too unqualified value to this conception. We ought not to forget that it is only an image, and that this image does not express everything that we are compelled to include in our thought of God. Not only philosophical reflection but religious feeling also demands that, in our mode of representing God, his exaltation over all created things should count for as much as his fatherly disposition; nay, a one-sided emphasis on the latter has a distinctly mischievous effect if we deduce from it the inference that God ought not to suffer so much evil to exist in the world, and if we despair of God because of the undeniable existence of evil in so awful a measure.

On no account would I suggest that we ought to renounce the thought of the Fatherly Love of God; on the contrary, I believe that in it Jesus brought to light the most precious

thing religion contains. Nevertheless, Jesus has not provided the means which would enable us to maintain this thought in the presence of evil. It is no longer possible to say simply, "Behold the lilies of the field ; behold the fowls of the heaven." Not until modern times has thought consciously placed before itself the idea in which the solution of the difficulty appears to lie—I mean the idea of evolution. If I admit that God intends the course of things to attain its end under the form of evolution, I thereby wholly exclude the supposition that the world can be perfect in any single moment of its history, save perhaps at some final limit, when evolution would be evolution no more. It follows, further, from the same admission, that I regard all the terrible consequences which evolution necessarily entails as included within the Will of God ; while at the same time I am able to believe that in the last resort it is love which impels him to conduct his creation through such an evolution, because he stands at a sufficient height above the world to know that the chosen way leads to the world's well-being, nay, is perhaps the only way in which the world can exist at all. Some such completion of the thought of Jesus I therefore require ; this, however, is not to abandon the thought of Jesus, but only to reject an application of it which is entirely too naïve.

The idea of sonship to God, which is the obverse of God's Fatherly Love, can also be taken in too naïve a sense ; and occasion for such a mode of interpretation is offered by Jesus himself in his absolute trust that God provides for all the needs of his children. When, however, the moment arrived at which this trust was contradicted by events, Jesus proved that his religious life had not become distracted, but was ready to take the form of resignation to the will of God. Thus Jesus himself has provided us with the means of correcting a one-sided application of the words in which his confidence is expressed. Here also, if we take both halves of the truth together, we may find something that is precious for all time.

I hope that the reader will observe how carefully I would guard myself from any form of exaggeration. Nevertheless, considering the matter with the utmost possible sobriety of mind, I still arrive at an affirmative answer to the third of my four principal questions (see p. 60) in the essential points. Certainly I cannot proceed without qualification in the manner described at the beginning of my article, and say outright that Jesus was the bringer of the perfect religion; for, on the one hand, we have to attribute to his religion certain ideas and presuppositions of his time which we to-day cannot accept, and, on the other hand, it lacked the completions which only a later age could furnish. But in the essential matter of genuine piety what has come down to us from the religion of Jesus has proved itself to be of infinite value. His fundamental principles have actually permeated the world like leaven, and are permeating it more and more; and so far, no prospect exists that anything better will be able to displace them.

IV.

What now remains is only to draw out the consequences, which this view of the matter involves, regarding the reverence which is due to him. The answer to this question would be relatively simple if it had to start from the present, and required guidance by that judgment only which we of this age, following our best insight, have formed concerning Jesus. In that case I should say simply that my reverence for him has its foundation and, at the same time, its limits in that which he has to offer me. This is what we actually do in regard to all the leaders of humanity, and it is without doubt agreeable to the nature of the case. For myself as a single individual this attitude determines the general character of my view concerning Jesus also.

But on no account must we overlook the fact that the question becomes extremely complex the moment we remember that the history of nigh two thousand years has

a voice in deciding our attitude. The reverence men pay to Jesus has long fixed its forms and its measures, and it has done so on the ground of assumptions quite different from those which we should employ to-day. Our own position stands in unbroken continuity with this past. If anything is to be surrendered of what has been handed down, the result is that many members of the Christian Church feel that their religious inheritance has been correspondingly curtailed. Moreover, public worship—the proper occasion for the veneration of Jesus—is an exercise in which all participate, and must be so.

What, then, is to be done? If an improvement is to be introduced, as Roberts desires, then he, and those who think with him, must make the beginning. With strict veracity in regard to Jesus, they must employ, even in their sermons, only such expressions as they can justify before their scientific consciences. For my part, I never use the phraseology which makes him unique, or the Mediator; I do not call him “the Son of God,” but “a child of God”; because this last expression involves the idea that he stands essentially in line with all other children of God—an idea originally included in the epithet “Son of God,” but obscured by the usages of Church diction. Moreover, I maintain a clear distinction between the terms “Jesus” and “Christ” in my own practice, and demand that it shall be maintained in the intercourse of theologians with one another; at the same time, we cannot count on laymen understanding the distinction and themselves observing it.

My own experiences and those of my former pupils have again and again shown me that by means of such a strictly correct manner of speech, and by the delineation of a purely human image of Jesus, the attraction which he exercises over quite conservatively-minded Church-members is not in the least diminished, but, on the contrary, intensified. It is important that such experiences should be made known among theologians in order that they may gain courage to adopt this

method of preaching. I refer to those who have hitherto avoided it not on grounds of inner conviction, but for the sake of the supposed needs of the laity. The call for stricter veracity, if it continues to be raised with Roberts' moral earnestness, cannot fail to make an impression in the long-run.

We have experienced in Germany an excellent example of the rapidity with which an earnest spirit of veracity makes its way. One of the chief doctrines of Ritschl was the following:—There is a loving God; He is revealed to us through Jesus only, especially through his trusting faith in God's love; and therefore he himself is God. Other theologians from all sides were unable to understand, in the first place, how every revelation of God's love outside the person of Jesus could be denied; in the second place, how it was possible to so blindly believe a truth of which no announcement could be found anywhere else, when warranted only by one whom Ritschl regarded as wholly human; and in the third place, how it was then possible to call him God. But Ritschl gained over to his side the whole generation of theologians who to-day are called the Moderns, and are the representative of the scientific current in the German theological world, along with the followers of the older free-thinking tendency, who are far less numerous than the Moderns. What has happened in the meantime is this: to-day there is hardly a single member of that school who does not admit a revelation of a God of love outside the person of Jesus, or who speaks of his Godhead.

Such rapid progress is certainly not to be expected at all points. Something we have not yet mentioned still remains to be considered. Ever since the origin of the belief that the Very Godhead is presented to man in Jesus, men have attached themselves to him, and believed that they derived directly from spiritual intercourse with him all the gifts needed for the welfare of their souls. When this conviction of the full Godhead of Jesus began to totter under critical investigation, men were as reluctant as ever to dispense

also for Germany

with the blessings resulting from that immediate intercourse with him. Hence it was that men involuntarily idealised his historical figure, and turned his name into a kind of abridgment for the content of everything that has religious value. If we now say "Jesus is my life," we are not referring to the historical Jesus, as including characteristics which to us are unacceptable, but we are referring to an ideal for which the historical Jesus has supplied only the essential features.

That this kind of attachment to Jesus should cease, in order to satisfy the demands of veracity, is surely not the wish of Roberts. In such an event, religion would certainly lose something which is essential to its nature. Religion always unfolds itself with the greatest vitality in the intercourse of a person with a person. For that reason it thinks of God as a Person with whom communion can be held, and greatly prefers to commune with a Person who at the same time comes nearer to the soul in the guise of humanity. In discussion with theologians, the truth must be most deeply emphasised that it is impossible to hold a real communion with Jesus as a man of the past; what appears to be such a communion consists entirely in self-identification with the mental attitude of Jesus, and in producing in oneself thoughts which are believed to be called into being by Jesus in a kind of conversation. Such a proceeding, however, is richly fraught with blessing to the soul, even though it involves an intellectual error. And naturally it leads to a lofty reverence such as is rendered to no other hero, however great, to no other benefactor of mankind, however eminent. To all these we look up with awe, with the feeling of littleness in comparison with them, with heartfelt gratitude for what we have received from them, and with the consciousness of still being by them helped forward on the path of victory. But towards none of them do men stand in relations of such intimate spiritual communion as towards Jesus; because the region in which they feel he is helping them is more central than in the case of the rest; and because from none else as from him do they receive so deep an

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impression that he has a heart of love for every human being who approaches him—thanks to his image as depicted in the gospels.

Reverence of this kind will always express itself in a way exceeding the limits of what Roberts desires, and of what I, too, am equally inclined to wish in order that ambiguity may be avoided. The task of the scientific theologian is here, as everywhere, to take up a position above all doctrinal tendencies, and to acquire a full and sympathetic understanding of the psychology of religion. In this connection I assume from the outset that all this idealisation of Jesus originates in actual piety, and develops unreflectively and in a naïve manner. But I am compelled to pass a very different judgment when it is taken in hand by theologians who have, or ought to have, a full consciousness of what they are doing, and who aim, or on frank self-examination would have to confess that they aim, at making it appear that their modern critical position is in agreement with conservative theology.

Now, this naïve and pious idealisation of Jesus is not insusceptible of improvement in its mode of operation. That man who possesses and exhibits understanding of the underlying piety of this attitude is the very man who will obtain the earliest hearing, when trying to guard the veneration of Jesus from taking a form that is inwardly untrue or even irreligious, and, for example, would lead to what the late Professor Lüdemann of Kiel has named (in the title of a little book of 1861) “the denial of God the Father.” As to the special question of prayer to Jesus, it would perhaps be not impracticable that prayers which, to a deeper insight, ought to be addressed only to God, should be laid aside by a process of replacing them with others which no one feels reluctance in addressing to Jesus. Their content might be somewhat as follows: “Be thou my guiding star; let thy image stand ever before mine eyes; rule my heart; make me thy disciple.”

A brief word in conclusion on the question whether Jesus ever lived. Roberts points to certain circumstances which concur in raising doubt, but makes no definite assertions. I might therefore pass over this point entirely. But I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that, if I rightly understand him, Roberts also seems to support the error that the nine "foundation pillars" which I set up for a genuinely scientific Life of Jesus constitute the whole of what I regard as credible in that Life.¹ In all my English publications, and especially in my preface to Neumann's *Jesus* (London, A. & C. Black, 1906), I have emphatically said that they form merely the ground-plan of what is credible; and that, when once the existence of Jesus has been proved by their means, then everything in the first three gospels which agrees with the image of Jesus as founded on the "Pillars," and does not lie otherwise open to objection, is worthy of belief.

PAUL SCHMIEDEL.

¹ In the original text of the portion of Mr Roberts' article here referred to there was a misprint, the word "passages" having appeared as "pass ages." See the reprint of the article, p. 273. The original text, to which Professor Schmiedel is referring, ran as follows:—"Following it, we pass through narrowing areas of admissible statement, and, guided by Dr Schmiedel's 'pillar,' pass ages, till," etc.—EDITOR.

THE IDEALISM OF JESUS.

PROFESSOR HENRY JONES.

WHEN Descartes discovered the insufficiency of the grounds upon which he held his opinions, and resolved to treat them as doubtful until he could reconstruct them on some secure basis, he reserved certain principles. These principles he would provisionally regard as valid and certain, lest, during the process of demolishing and reconstructing his knowledge, he should be deprived of all guidance in the conduct of his ordinary life.

It has seemed to me that the example of Descartes may be useful to many men who are interested in the truth of the Christian faith, and who believe that its existence is at stake in the controversy over the question of "*Jesus or Christ?*" which is engaging the religious thought of the present day so profoundly. I do not doubt that this controversy is important; but I hardly believe that Christian faith must suffer eclipse and the Christian life remain paralysed until the issue is determined. I should like to try to look beyond, or, at the least, to look away from it, and to direct attention to those principles which no one doubts that Jesus declared in his life and teaching, and which constitute what I shall venture to call his Idealism. I would convince Christian believers that the Christian religion will emerge safely out of the wash and welter of the debate, and that Jesus of Nazareth will triumph in the triumph of the faith he has founded.

One needs only a very limited knowledge of the history of

Christianity to be convinced of the error of exaggerating the significance of the doctrinal controversies which convulse it.

In the first place, the methods of controversy are not the most powerful instruments for the education of mankind in the truth. In the second place, the significance of this particular controversy is not in all respects as momentous to the Christian life as is generally believed by those who are engaged in it. And, in the third place, I can imagine that its final results may be different from what is usually expected. It is even possible that what is being done in the course of the controversy is to resolve an antithesis more vital to Christianity than that of "*Jesus or Christ.*"

However important the issue as to "*Jesus or Christ?*" may be, it is a single issue, and for the purposes of controversy it is necessarily isolated. But, in the province of morality or religion, controversies on single issues have not the same import as in other provinces. In the case of the abstract sciences—of mathematics, for instance, or of physics and biology—the demonstration or the refutation of a particular view can be definite and final, so far at least as it falls within the fundamental hypothesis upon which the particular science rests. Particular theories are being constantly established or refuted in this direct way in all the special sciences. But this is not usually, if it is ever, the case with particular questions in morals or religion or philosophy.

To take one instance, most educated men, in these days, have repudiated the belief that God punishes the wicked with torture to all eternity. They have done so not because they have weighed the arguments for and against this particular doctrine, but because they have adopted other beliefs which are incompatible with it. They have changed their view of God. They have changed it so fundamentally that they cannot any longer give the name of God to a being who could cause, or permit, or who was unable to prevent, the coming into existence of finite creatures destined to such a fate. The doctrine of eternal punishment has ceased to interest them,

except historically. It has suffered the final refutation, which is to be outgrown. Once the conception of God has been moralised, the problems connected with eternal punishment and the arguments for and against it have all alike become obsolete. Nay, the final utility and value of the whole controversy, we now see, consisted in its reaction upon other questions, and especially in the indirect light it threw upon the conception of God.

In suggesting that the value of controversy on special issues in matters spiritual is limited, I do not mean to imply that the use of reason, or even of the most rigorous logical methods, is more restricted in this domain than in others. Clear and persistent thinking—thinking that will not compromise with obscurity and indefiniteness—is as necessary in theology or morals as in mathematics: perhaps it is of even greater importance. Besides, it is scepticism which is afraid of the rigorous methods of the intellect, and not faith. Faith invites stern inquiry, and anticipates its own triumph in the results.

The reason why controversy on isolated religious issues has less value and is less definitive than others is that the very act of isolating is apt to falsify them. It does violence to the facts under discussion. Natural objects are related to one another in a comparatively external way, and they can be considered one by one, or as members of abstract systems, or in their special aspects, with much profit. But such is the unity of spiritual experience, even when it is not reflective, that no particular opinion can be adopted, rejected, or changed except by modifying the whole of that experience. On the other hand, subtle changes may take place in the tone or temper of experience, which may alter the perspective of all the facts it contains. Without conscious controversy, even with one's self, a new attitude towards life may react upon and change the meaning of facts and doctrines which have never been definitely refuted. When men rise to a new spiritual level—it may be from suffering, or bereavement, or defeat in

the struggle for finite and perishable ends; when, for any reason, they gain a new insight and acquire a deeper faith in the divine love which sustains the world, they will find the whole body of their religious and moral belief suffer change. Every term in their theology will have a new significance: the life of Jesus, the love of God, the meaning of the world, the destiny of man, pass through a strange and subtle alchemy which is priceless, and which the methods of controversy most rarely produce. There are impulses to reflection, from which spiritual growth ensues, which are far more effective than controversy; *and it is spiritual growth which ultimately determines every theology.*

But, it will be answered, the limited use thus attributed to controversy attaches only to issues which are of a secondary or derivative importance. In the domain of practical life, we recognise that "there are necessities which choose and are not chosen." Are there not similar necessities in the domain of thought? Surely, all discussion is impossible in any natural science until the regulative hypothesis on which that science rests has been apprehended and adopted. Must we not in the same way maintain that there are some truths which are dominant for the Christian religion? Are there not some issues which cannot be either postponed or compromised? And is not the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth the paramount issue? Christianity, it may be held, was not vitally concerned in the question of eternal punishment, nor in that of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The first of these doctrines did not determine, but was determined by, its theological context; the second was not the spring of the religious authority of Christianity. But can this be said of the person of Jesus of Nazareth? Must we not at the very threshold of Christian belief answer the question, "Whom say ye that I am?"

I am not persuaded that we must. I confess that I cannot foresee that any great advantage can accrue to religious faith from the attempts which are being made to demonstrate the limitations of Jesus, or to prove, through such limitations, that

he was "merely a pious Jew of more than usual purity and depth of character." But, on the other hand, I cannot see what accession of spiritual power Christianity can have from demonstrating the opposite,—that is, the *unlikeness* of Jesus of Nazareth to other men. It was not the purpose of his mission to prove that he was different from others. The accent of his teaching did not fall upon anything that separates men from him or from God. Whatever else we know, or do not know, of Jesus, we know that he came to declare the Father. And it is possible that no Christology can matter much provided that this declaration is received. Nay, it is possible that Jesus himself will be best interpreted in the light of the witness he bore of God as Father.

The view that no particular theory of Christ's person can be regarded as essential to "the believing Christian attitude" is strongly held by some men who belong to the more conservative school of Christian theology, and even by some of them who do not regard the operations of reason as irrelevant to Christian faith. According to Dr Denney, so long as we are bound to Jesus Christ we are bound to naught else. "We are not bound to any man's or to any Church's rendering of what He is or has done. We are not bound to any Christology or to any doctrine of the work of Christ."¹ Even the difference between the Arian and the Athanasian view is of secondary importance. "One may be convinced, as the writer is, that the Arian answer is quite unreal, and as convinced that the Athanasian answer explains nothing. It is not on the answer at all that a man's Christianity depends, but on something antecedent even to the question."² That something antecedent, that which is essential to Christian faith is, according to Dr Denney,³ that we should be able to say

¹ *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 382.

² *Ibid.*, p. 403.

³ I am citing Dr Denney, not with the purpose of specially examining his view, but because of my respect for his learning and reverence for his character, and because he is justly regarded as an eminently great representative of the more conservative school of Christian Theology in this country. His statement of its position is the strongest and most decisive which I know.

truly : " I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour." ¹

I should, however, be making an unfair use of Dr Denney's opinions were I to employ them for the unqualified support of my own. I must make our difference clear. By doing so, I shall be able to indicate what I consider to be essential to the Christian faith, and to constitute the central truth of the Idealism of Jesus.

When he relegates the Athanasian view, or the differences between that view and the Arian, to a position of secondary importance, it is on the ground that these questions emerge in another region than that of Christian faith. The doctrine that " Christ is consubstantial with the Father " he regards as a purely metaphysical proposition ; " for whatever religious interest it is supposed to guard, it is a purely metaphysical proposition." ² The " Metaphysics of Christ's Person," he believes, is not entitled to a place in the Christian creed.

Much might be made of this attitude towards metaphysics, but I shall pass it over with one remark : " Consubstantiality " may be a metaphysical term ; but there is no term which may not be metaphysical. To call a term or a doctrine metaphysical may help some men to reject it ; but metaphysical doctrines are just like others, some of them true and some of them false ; and metaphysical thought is not distinguished from other thinking except that it is, or ought to be, more persistent and thorough, and describes objects more accurately and fully. And whatever more " consubstantiality " meant when the term was in vogue, it implied, and it still implies, even for simple men, that Jesus of Nazareth was in some way one with God ; and the acceptance or rejection of this view was regarded as vital.

But Dr Denney draws the line of division between those who accept and those who reject the Christian faith otherwise. What is vital to him is to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God ; not *a* Son, but *the* Son. " ' Son of God,' in

¹ *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 398.

² *Ibid.*, p. 392.

ancient times," he tells us, "was used with great latitude of meaning, both by Jews and Gentiles; but what it conveys here is that Jesus' consciousness of God was truly filial. God was to him Father and He was to God Son. When we describe Him as the only Son of God, what is signified is that in that filial consciousness He stands alone in the world. He is not, as He conceives Himself and as Christian faith recognises Him, a Son of God, but the Son."¹ That Jesus is the *only* Son of God is regarded by Dr Denney as an essential element of Christian belief. That is to say, he attaches the utmost importance to the term "only," or to the *difference* between the relation of Jesus to God and that of other men. The New Testament estimate of him, and his own consciousness of himself must, he says, "cover or include two things: first, that the Person concerned is to God what no other can be; and second, that He is also what no other can be to man."² Except in the light of this difference the Gospel record of Jesus, the power he has exercised over mankind, in short, the whole meaning of his personality and mission, is unintelligible. That he is *the* Son of God gives a different significance and a different value to all he did or said. It places him in a position to which that of the founders of other religions offers no analogy. Indeed, throughout the whole volume the utmost emphasis is placed upon the claim made for Jesus in the Gospels and by the Church, and upon the consciousness on the part of Jesus himself of "a relation to God and humanity in which He stands absolutely alone."³

What, then, is this relation to God and humanity in which "Jesus stands absolutely alone," and the acceptance or the rejection of the uniqueness of which is the decisive question for Christian faith? Dr Denney informs us that "no metaphysical solution or explanation is offered of the fact that Christ is to God what no other is or can be; the fact is simply declared—and if the Christianity of the New Testament and

¹ *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 399.

² *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

of the consciousness of Jesus is to survive it must be declared—when he is called God's only Son."¹ But if there is no metaphysical explanation, is there any other kind of explanation of this absolutely crucial matter? Or even if no explanation of the difference can be found, either in the New Testament or elsewhere, may we know what the difference is?

It might be said that we can infer the difference between Jesus and others from the facts recorded in the Gospels. But this is not possible, for we are informed that the facts themselves are either impossible or unintelligible unless we admit this difference. We are told that the events of the life of Jesus, the claims he made for himself, the place he has been given by the Church, the power he has exercised over mankind are absolutely incomprehensible unless we assume that he was *the* Son of God, standing both to God and to man in a relation absolutely different from all others. Attributed to a mere pious Jew they are incredible. This is the main argument of Dr Denney. But it is not valid: for it is plain that we cannot both assume the facts to prove the difference, and assume the difference to prove the facts. Once we believe this difference, there is no doubt that, as Dr Denney shows, belief in other things may follow—belief in the Virgin Birth, in the descent of the Holy Spirit, in the Resurrection, and so forth. The amplest room is left for the restoration of all the articles of the faith. But, unfortunately, the door has been thrown open for superstition as well as faith. The life of Jesus has been lifted out of the context of human causes and effects, and we have no canons for judgment, or criteria of truth any more. Anything may be asserted: *but, also, anything may be denied*. The moment religious faith is made to rest upon the supernatural and the superhuman, the moment that things divine do not express themselves in the ordinary world and in the ordinary life of man,—religion becomes indistinguishable from superstition. The only alternatives which such a dogmatism permits are either superstition or

¹ *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 399.

agnosticism. The Church, in establishing a gulf between God on the one side and man and nature on the other, has made itself responsible for agnosticism. And this tragic error is repeated, so far as Christian belief is concerned, whenever a gulf is established between Christ and man, and Jesus of Nazareth is made to stand absolutely alone. All theories of the person of Christ, every form of Christology, are, we are told, matters of secondary importance; but I venture to say that there is one theory which is fundamentally inimical to every Christian faith—namely, that which separates man from Christ.

And it is such a separation which is involved in the attempt to make the admission of a difference between Jesus and others decisive of the Christian faith. For, on this view, it is not enough to admit his pre-eminence in goodness and greatness. It is not enough to attribute the power Jesus has exercised upon mankind to the truth of his doctrine, to the unexampled depth of his spiritual intuitions, to the greater profundity of his spiritual life, to his more perfect trust in God, to his more wonderful love to God and to man. It is not simply by excelling others that he has gathered “into the deep and powerful stream of his own life all souls in search of God.”

I have not scrupled to delay the reader over questions that may at first sight appear to be remote from the special subject of this essay, namely, “The Idealism of Jesus.” But, in this case, the gravest difficulties are preliminary difficulties. By making the relation of Jesus to God unique, the idealising light which he threw upon human nature through the momentous conception of its affinity to the divine is obscured. Similarly in the controversy which turns around “Jesus or Christ?” what is debated is the relation of Jesus to God; but that which is involved in the problem of his Idealism is the relation of man to God. It is the personality of Jesus that is of paramount importance in the first case; it is the nature of man that is of paramount importance in the second. The first issue is, “Was Jesus of Nazareth divine?” The second issue is, “Was Jesus alone divine of all those who have walked the

earth?" It is the *exclusiveness* of his relation to God which is at stake. Does Jesus *alone* stand in a "truly filial" relation to God? Or can man also truly call God "Father"? If he can, must he do so in some fundamentally different sense, so that the solitariness of the sonship of Jesus remains absolute? Did Jesus reveal his own divine nature only, or did he, in doing so, lift away the limits of man's littleness, reveal in man also the existence of a nature of such intrinsic worth, possibilities so vast, aims so high, that the phrase "mere man" will seem to imply blasphemy against human nature?

It will be maintained by many, I have no doubt, that the first of the issues I have indicated involves the second. That is to say, it will be held that there can be little meaning in saying that Jesus was the Son of God if it is added that other men are also sons of God, and in the same sense. The relation of Jesus to God, in order to be real and significant, must, it may be said, be unique. Little importance can be placed upon the phrase "divine man" if it is made to apply to every man, however imperfect and sinful.

But this must not be taken for granted. My main purpose in this essay is to do what I can to prevent it from being taken for granted.

I know that it *was* taken for granted for many centuries by the Christian Church. The light that Jesus threw upon the nature of man, a light reflected upon man from the conception of God as universal Father, was not regarded. It was not recognised as an essential part of his mission to reveal man to himself. Indeed, the truth of man's sonship could not be received; it was shut out by presuppositions that were inconsistent with it. There were "two natures," a human and divine, in Jesus himself, and so opposed were their attributes that they could at best be only forced into an external conjunction. The infinite God and finite man, that which is in its nature divine and that which is in its nature human, were assumed to be exclusive. In the face of the constant reiteration by Jesus of the divine fatherhood of God, and, by

consequence, of the essential sonship of man; while the common prayer of the Church opened with the pregnant phrase, "Our Father"; in the face of the incarnation itself, which *is* the *unity* in one person of a perfect humanity with God, the sonship of man was still not recognised. The "pure idea of a divine humanity" was not apprehended. God was holy; man was vile. God was a consuming fire; man might not approach him except through media—through Jesus, through the priesthood, through rites and ceremonies, through the conception of propitiatory sacrifice to a God whose wrath was unappeasable otherwise; through media which were all alike symbolic of an attitude in God towards man which was not consistent with that of a Father to his erring and sin-struck children. If man, by the help of these media—through Jesus Christ, or through the Virgin Mother, or through any other means—believed in God, man's relation to God was changed: he was "initiated" or "adopted" into sonship. But "intercession" with God was also necessary, and sinful man might not, or could not, plead with him: he had been cast away. And the plea which was made for man was not based upon the love of God, nor was the appeal directed to the infinitude of his fatherly compassion: it was based upon the merit of one who, to appease the wrath of God, had suffered death. In fact, ideas of the Divine Being derived from Judaism remained to obscure and distort the revelation made by Jesus; and they remain to this day. It is not too much to say that, except in so far as the faith of the Church transgressed its theology and rose above its own *scheme* of salvation, it was not the first person in its Trinity which was its God, but Jesus. It was to Jesus that men fled for refuge; it was in the shadow of his cross that they sought shelter; he was their help. But this is as much as to say that Jesus and Jesus alone was their God. For what do men mean by "God"? Surely, that God is the object of their trust. God is their refuge. God is their help. Hardly, and through many difficulties, could the minds of men rise to the fact that God

was as loving, as ready to forgive as Jesus himself, and that *his* death was a manifestation, in time, of a self-sacrificing love which is eternal.

Now, rightly or wrongly, the nature of God and, in consequence, the nature of man, and the relation of God to man and man to God, are understood in a different way. Such conceptions as those of the divinity of man and the immanence of God are becoming commonplaces of religious thought. They may be not less "metaphysical" than the conception of "consubstantiality," and their implications may be difficult to interpret and be interpreted differently by different men. But one thing is evident enough, even to the simple, namely, that they indicate an affinity between God and man and a nearness of God to man which the earlier creeds obscured; and also that they flow from the conception of the fatherhood of God which Jesus taught. Hardly less evident is it that this conception is exposing the inadequacy and even the irrelevancy of the judicial arrangements, and the punitive atonement, by which man might *become* a child of God and God might *become* the Father of man. Man, it is now held, is by nature the child of God. And, deeply as man can sin, he cannot sin away his nature; nor can he extinguish the love which divine fatherhood implies. "Conversion" is the greatest event in the history of man. But "conversion" does not consist in establishing a "filial" relationship which did not exist before; and, assuredly, it does not imply that God himself is changed. His fatherhood is not contingent upon man's conversion. Conversion is the recognition by man of a relationship that existed from the beginning, of a love to which he had been blind, and of a sonship which he neither prized nor knew. For, in coming to know God as Father, man comes to know himself, and what manner of being is wronged through the alienation of a wicked life. Man is, indeed, a prodigal in a far country, but he is a son the same. Coming to himself, he finds that he is "no more worthy to be called a son."

Is the parable of the Prodigal Son not plain? Did Jesus not speak it? Is it inconsistent with the tenor of his teaching? Is it one of the truths "spoken *ad hoc* or *ad hominem*," limited in its validity and confined as to its application? Are we to understand it with a difference? Is man's filial consciousness not "truly filial"?

I have no hesitation in saying that the idealisation of man through the conception of the fatherhood of God, the revelation of the intrinsic splendour of man's nature as the child of God, as incapable of being satisfied except with the love of God, as called to seek to be perfect, "even as his Father which is in heaven is perfect," is of the very essence of the doctrine of Jesus.

We hear of "the self-consciousness of Jesus" and of "the self-revelation of Jesus." I can conceive that to the mind of Jesus it was a greater thing that men should know and believe that God was their Father and that they were therefore his children, than that they should know that he was his *only* Son, or that they were God's children in a qualified sense. Jesus did not come *in order* to reveal his singularity or his isolation; nor, indeed, to reveal himself at all. The *purpose* of his coming was to show to men, not only with what love they were loved by himself, but with what love they were loved by God. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."¹ It was this truth which Jesus taught; it was this that he presented in the living pattern of his life, that he ratified and exemplified by his consciousness of his own Sonship, established and sealed by his death; and it was this truth thus lived which gave to Jesus of Nazareth the place and the power which are all his own in the history of mankind.

To compromise the divine fatherhood, to accept it only in some qualified sense, to accentuate the uniqueness of the filial relationship of Jesus of Nazareth is, I believe, to fall

¹ John xvii. 26.

short of apprehending the momentous significance of what Jesus came to reveal to mankind. "The basis of the thought of Jesus is . . . that man is not merely the creature, but the Son of God. This sonship Jesus, as the Messiah, claims for himself, that he may claim it for man."¹

Sonship and fatherhood are, of course, metaphors or symbols. They are meant to signify that love of God to man and of man to God which *unites*. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."² The flame of a love so perfect consumes all differences in one fire. The distinction between a "truly filial consciousness," or a sonship in an unqualified sense, and some other filial consciousness or sonship, disappears. It is artificial, irrelevant, "metaphysical," the product of a theology which dared not rise to the height of the boldness with which Jesus asserted the nearness of God to man and of man to God, and which could not admit his revelation without qualifying it.

The emphasis so long thrown upon the uniqueness of Jesus was meant in the past not only to affirm his divinity but to deny the divinity of man. The emphasis thrown upon it in the present time has a different purpose. It now springs from confusion. It is not meant *now* to contradict or to limit the fatherhood of God. It is meant to furnish an undeniable basis for that faith. But it is the *content* of the faith that matters. In what way men come into possession of that faith; by what medium, through what teacher, by what dealings of God's Providence, would, I believe, not have concerned the compassionate Nazarene teacher. I can well believe that he felt that he stood alone in his mission; and that the revelation had come to him with a fulness and power with which it came to no other, I do not doubt: but if it could come in another way—and has it never come in any other way?—I do not believe that he would have concerned himself about the manner of its coming.

But I must now endeavour, however briefly, to suggest

¹ E. Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 139.

² John xvii. 21.

something of the content of the Idealism which, through the conception of divine fatherhood, has so transformed man's conception of himself as not only to make him the creature, but the child of God. The rays of this revelation extend over the whole region of man's experience. The idea of God as Father illumines with a new splendour not only the nature of man, but the whole universe in which a God, who is infinite Love, manifests his power and his goodness. It implies a reinterpretation, not only of man's nature, but of the conditions under which the possibilities of his nature can be realised, and of the obstacles by victory over which alone the realisation of that which is spiritual can take place. It implies a reinterpretation of the world and of all that man meets in the world; of sin and temptation, of sorrow and suffering and death. Duty acquires a new grandeur; in becoming the service of a loving Father, who is God, it becomes at once more obligatory and more free. Sin acquires a deeper taint, because a more tragic wrong is done to a greater love; and the forgiveness of sin acquires a new tenderness and fulness. The relations of man to man are suffused with a new glory. The egoism of self-seeking is rebuked, and even "the charities of social life come back multiplied in the tenderer and purer ties of Christian brotherhood."

That the revelation made by Jesus of the fatherhood of God and of the sonship and brotherhood of men is all this *only in principle* is true. We cannot attribute to Jesus a *system* of doctrines—either moral, or social, or philosophical, or theological. Nevertheless we cannot insist upon the absence of a system, and regard its absence as a proof of his limitations. The error of *not* finding it is as deep as the error of seeking it. His teaching, intuitive as it was both in substance and in form, was not made up of the sporadic and inconsequent interjections of a discontinuous mind. No man ever lived who was more deeply possessed by a great thought, or who lived in its service and its power with such sublime consistency, and with such an all-challenging courage.

That he did not explicate its contents into a system of doctrines, and that his teaching was therefore limited or defective, is an objection so superficial and irrelevant that it is difficult to treat it with respect. The great principles of moral and religious life cannot be revealed to man in the fullness of their implications. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed . . . which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."¹ To know spiritual principles man must live the spiritual life. It is only the history of the world that can evolve the contents of the principle by which the world subsists.

From this point of view we can speak of the Idealism of Jesus without introducing misleading associations ; we can contemplate the power of the principle he enunciated without suggesting either the presence or the absence of a system. And of that Idealism we can say, I believe, that its central truth was so great and its consequences so momentous that it contains the substantial essence and virtue of all Idealism.

It was the boldest Idealism, and it was the most unflinchingly held in the face of every doubt and of every tragedy, that was ever taught to man. It could exhaust the cup of the bitterness of the life of man to the lees. It could put to his lips the cup of joy, filled with the waters of eternal life. It gave to his moral aims and his religious faith an extension which cannot be limited and an assurance which cannot fail.

There is not one element of Christian morality or of Christian religion which is not deepened through the recognition of the veritable unity of the divine and human nature, which is the essence of the Idealism of Jesus. There is no element which is not weakened by whatever qualifies or compromises that unity. And that which is thus said of the relation of man to God holds of the relation of man to Jesus.

¹ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

Indeed, we stultify the conception of the unity of God and man, if we reinstate a chasm between Jesus and man.

All that is regarded as isolating Jesus, every difference which we would render absolute, every quality in which man cannot participate with Jesus in some degree, lies beyond man's apprehension as well as comprehension of him. It belongs to the empty sphere which the imagination projects beyond the limits of even possible experience; and it must remain as valueless for man's practice as it is empty for his thought. That way lies the unknowable; and the unknowable, even if it could be anything at all, is not necessarily divine: it may be something else. Nor is God unknowable if Jesus revealed him; and Jesus could not reveal him by means of that which was unknowable in himself.

"Take all in a word: the truth in God's breast
Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed;
Though he is so bright and we so dim,
We are made in his image to witness him." ¹

There are two truths which concern the Christian faith as deeply as does the divinity of its founder: they are the *humanity* of Christ and the *divinity* of man. Both of these truths are obscured by the controversy regarding the antithesis of "Jesus or Christ?" and both of them are rendered of no effect by the establishment of such a difference between Jesus and others as makes him "to God what no other can be; and what no other can be to man."

That the humanity of Christ must be maintained is, indeed, admitted by those who are most emphatic in asserting his difference from others. Whatever that relation to God may be in which Jesus is said to stand alone—whether he be called "the incarnated God," or "consubstantial with God," or "the Son of God" in an Arian or any other sense—we must not take away from the full verity of his manhood. There are on this view of the Christian faith three essential requirements: (1) Jesus of Nazareth must be held to be truly divine; (2) he

¹ Browning's *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*.

must be held to be truly human; (3) he must be held to be different in a momentous way from all other men. I am concerned with the last of these three.

This view is set forth by Dr Denney in a way at once so clear and firm and so representative of the school of Christian thought of which he is a protagonist that I must be allowed to refer to him once more. At the close of an investigation whose sincerity and power no one can deny, he sums up his inquiry (1) into the testimony of the Gospels of Jesus, (2) into the view held of Jesus by the Christian Church, (3) into the consciousness of Jesus of himself in the following statement: "While His true manhood is unquestionably assumed, He is set as unquestionably on the side of reality which we call divine and which confronts man."¹ The statement is manifestly carefully weighed. It will be observed that we are not told that Jesus is divine, or is God; but that he is "set on the side of reality which we call divine." Again, we are not told that "reality which we call divine" is opposed, in the sense of being antagonistic to man, but that it "confronts man." I wish to respect the restraint of the statement, and to refer only to the second part of it, namely, to that in which a distinction is drawn between Jesus of Nazareth and all other men. I understand that to say that Jesus "is set on the side of reality which we call divine and which confronts man," means that Jesus and the divine are on the same side, while *other men and the divine are not on the same side.*

It can hardly be necessary to insist on the fact that the difference between beings one of whom is set on the side of the divine, while all others are not on the side of the divine but are confronted by the divine, cannot but be a superlatively important difference. Indeed, it is admitted to be of the most momentous consequence. It concerns all that Jesus is; for on account of it he is both to God and to man "what no other can be,"² and it concerns all that he did for mankind, giving a unique authority to his doctrine

¹ *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 373.

² *Ibid.*, p. 398.

and unparalleled value and significance to his life and his death.

The question which I have now to ask is clear: it concerns the *difference* between Jesus and all others. What follows if we admit that the divine was on his side, and that the divine is not on our side, but confronts us?

In the first place, it seems to me that the value of the example of Jesus to mankind is destroyed. His example is not for us, but for some other beings, if there be any, who have the divine on their side. With the divine on the side of Jesus and "confronting" us we cannot be required, and it is not in our power, to follow his example. The disparity is too stupendous. Jesus is man, but he is also more than man: more by the momentous addition of the divine. Does his manhood remain unaffected by this addition? Is the manhood that has, the same as the manhood that has not, the divine on its side? Does not the addition signify, and is it not meant to signify, that the *Person* of Jesus was rendered unique thereby, endowed with qualities and powers in which man can have no share? But a difference so great between the nature or personality of the agents is a difference which affects all their actions. For what is an action except an expression of personality? And how can actions be compared if the persons from whom they issue differ in such a way that the one is, and the other is not, set on the side of the divine?

It may be said that there is no difference we can compare with this difference. Still, much smaller differences make it impossible for a being of one kind to be an example to a being of another kind. We do not even require the child to follow the example of a man, except in a very limited way. We do not expect an animal to follow the example of man in any way. Yet man is unquestionably a true animal, and he is set as unquestionably on the side of reality we call Reason and which confronts the animal. But this having reason "on his side" so transmutes "the animal" in man, that his actions can be moral or immoral, while the deep issues of right and

wrong are beyond the animal's reach, and all that he does is innocent.

I cannot see where this analogy fails, except in so far as it may not be adequate to the occasion, and understates the difference. If to be set on the side of reason changes the animal in man, to be set on the side of the divine can hardly change the meaning of a "true manhood" less: if the possession of reason places the example of man beyond the reach of the animal, the *solitary* possession of the divine places the example of Jesus not *less* beyond ours.

This way of conceiving the divinity of Jesus carries with it the denial of the divinity of man. The divinity is exclusive. On this view, there is a manhood which has, and there is a manhood which has not, the divine on its side. It will not be maintained that the divine which is on the side of Jesus, and on his side alone, is inoperative. It cannot be denied, so far as I can see, that it lifts the Personality of Jesus into a region which places his example beyond our reach. The yearning of the Christian soul to be "like unto Jesus" is, on this view, presumptuous and vain. We cannot be like him in that alone in which we would aspire to be like him, namely, in that which we call highest, best, and therefore "divine."

Again, Jesus of Nazareth, the Church believes, gained a victory over every temptation. But "he was set on the side of the divine, which confronts us." In the wilderness he was not alone—his Father was with him; but we are left alone in the wilderness: the divine is not on our side. I believe this is not so. There is in us a yearning after the good, never quite extinguished in any soul which is rational, a divine within that can respond to the divine which is everywhere around, warning us against the evil of yielding to the temptation. The divine is on our side too. If it is not, how can the victory of Jesus give us any assurance of *our* victory? Would we even struggle against temptation? Is the struggle against temptation not God seeking himself in us?

And did the temptations over which Jesus was victorious

mean to him what they mean to us? Did a traitor within him hold parley with the enemy without? For it is *that* in our case which constitutes the power of temptation. The temptation is strong because we are touched with infirmities: a truth which the writer to the Hebrews recognised. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." If we are to derive hope and courage in the struggle with evil from the victory of Jesus over all temptation, surely it cannot be by believing that the divine was on *his* side and that it *confronts us*.

Lastly, it is believed that Jesus rose from the dead. His victory over death revealed his immortality. But he was divine, or the divine was on his side; man is not divine, or the divine is not on his side. Has man, therefore, on this ground, the assurance of *his own* immortality?

I do not know how to avoid the conclusion that a difference so momentous between Jesus and mankind as places the divine on his side and not on ours, deprives man of the example of Jesus, of the inspiration in the struggle against evil which the victory of Jesus seemed to bring, and of the hope for the life to come that arose from belief in his resurrection. The disparity between the person of Jesus and the person of man is rendered so profound that every inference is barred.

The error, I would fain make clear, does not spring from maintaining the divinity of Jesus, but from denying the divinity of man. Nor can it be corrected by maintaining that Jesus was a "mere man": the implications of that phrase are themselves profoundly erroneous and unjust to man. The error lies in assuming an exclusive antithesis between the divine and the human: in shutting God out of the life of man, limiting His infinitude, and in rendering the nature of man secular and profane. It is the error both of the unitarianism of the past and of the theology to which it was opposed. It is refuted in the divine humanity of Jesus of Nazareth.

The view that Jesus was divine, or that he and he alone was set on the side of the divine, is intended, I know, to endow him with a splendour which is inexpressible and which passeth understanding. I do not object to the intention: I believe Jesus was divine. But when it is said that the splendour with which he was clothed, and which was divine, was his *only*, that it made him stand absolutely alone in the world, I must demur. That profoundly hard negative is not found in the Gospels; it was not believed by the Church, spite of all its creeds; it is not consistent with Christian faith. Man, too, is set on the side of reality which we call divine—on the side of the infinite love and mercy and justice than which there is naught more divine. He is set on its side always, even when, steeped in “the drunken slumber of sin,” he least recognises it. It will secure that he will awake.

In proof of the difference between Jesus of Nazareth and all others, and of the unapproachable isolation of his personality, powerful use is made by Dr Denney of “the startling and unparalleled” claims which Jesus made. And much store is always set on this argument by many Christians.

We are concerned in this argument with the most momentous of these claims, with that from which all others are regarded as following. And I need not repeat, perhaps, that I have not the least desire to lower it, and that I have no sympathy with those who undertake this task. I cannot accept such views as those of Renan. The startling utterances of Jesus regarding himself were not signs of his “exaltation,” or of “exaggeration,” or of his “being carried away by a fearfully increasing enthusiasm.” I think the claims, in so far as they were claims to what is divine—that is, spiritual—were true. But I cannot admit the argument which is drawn from them, namely, that they were proofs of his isolation.

It is because he was *not* isolated, it is because his claims were not made for himself alone, but for man as man, that they seem to me to be startling, and to have an unparalleled sublimity.

I can only touch upon this great subject ; though I think it were a most instructive process to take up the startling claims of Jesus, one by one, and to try the experiment in both ways : that is to say, to regard his claims, first, as made for himself alone as a unique being, and secondly as made for man. Follow the first method, place him in a relation to God in which he stands absolutely alone, set him and him alone on the side of the divine, attribute to him a personality, human if you desire it, but also deepened, widened, suffused with a divine in which no other man does or can participate,—the marvel of his claims ceases, and their value for us departs. No claim that could be made by a being so absolutely isolate and remote from ourselves should appear startling. We are in the region, not of the human, but of the human and more ; that is, of the superhuman, into which the human can never enter. Why should anything in that region cause us to marvel, or why should any claims whatsoever which are made by a being whose powers issue from a divine reality that is his alone appear too great ? Milton's angels were beings of a lower structure ; Gabriel and Michael were unspeakably less sublime, for the isolation of Jesus, we are told, is absolute in its grandeur. But we are not surprised at anything that Milton's angels do. The claims of Jesus are rendered meaningless, reduced into mere playthings of the superstitious imagination, by being thus made exclusive. They destroy the faith they are meant to found.

But reject the isolation of Jesus, let the divine that was on his side be on our side also, maintain his humanity in its fulness and truth, and the marvel of his claims is indeed great ; for *then* he makes the claims for himself, in order that he may make them also for man. Tossed in the tempest of human life, endowed with spiritual qualities which are the same as those of other men, with no mysterious reserve of strength except that strength divine in which all men, amidst all their wickedness and woes, may share—then, indeed, do the purity of Jesus, his tenderness, his courage, the strength

of his love to man, the depths of his suffering for their sake, the exaltation of his faith in God, his unmoved trust and his great peace, arrest the mind with wonder and fill the soul with joy and hope.

We find Jesus one day bidding his disciples "Be of good cheer," and claiming that he had overcome the world. If we are to understand this saying as coming from a being isolated by some unutterable majesty in which man can in nowise participate, what strength could the disciples draw from his words, or what marvel was it that he should "overcome the world"? But this is not the way in which I regard this scene, unparalleled in its pathos and sublimity. Reading the Scriptures as one who would fain follow the example of Jesus and draw hope in the difficulties of life from his unflinching Idealism, what I find is, "One who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," raised by his trust in God and by the assurance that the cause which he had made his own was God's own cause and must triumph, into a region where there was profound peace, and bidding his disciples have the same trust that they might have the same peace. Surrounded by the most humble band of disciples that ever followed a great teacher—disciples who knew neither the meaning of his sublime doctrine nor of the sublimer death which he was going to meet; disciples who should be "scattered, every man to his own, leaving him alone" to tread the wine-press, "for of the people there was none with him,"—yet he speaks of a peace that rose above all tribulation; he has yet the full assurance that his cause, abandoned and betrayed, would triumph; nay, that in it he had already "overcome the world."

The secret of all the mystery lay verily in the words: "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." In other words, the assurance of his victory did verily come from his consciousness that he was set on the side of reality which we call divine. But he came to communicate this secret; he had no other mission than to lead men to learn it,

and to convince them that the same reality was also on their side.

For to what reality can we give the name "divine"? Is it to that which is strange, alien, removed for ever into some transcendent region into which man can in nowise enter? Then the divine is unknowable: it can be described only by negations: it is *not* the natural, it is *not* the human; it is the supernatural and the superhuman. But Jesus of Nazareth came to reveal the divine, to make it known, and to bring it near to man. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The "reality which we call divine," and which Jesus revealed, was the love of God: the God who is Love. The reality that was on his side and that expressed itself in his words and deeds was a love so great towards God that it was God's love towards him. The love of Jesus was a love to man so full that it was not destroyed by any wrong that man could do, nor did it refuse to face any depth of self-sacrificing suffering. Is there aught more divine than that love? And is that divine reality not on the side of man? Can man in nowise participate in it? On the contrary, in that love and in the spiritual qualities which it implies, what is most divine and what is most truly human meet, and are at one. The spiritual unites: it is the supernatural which divides: and what loss has not mankind sustained by confusing these!

This *is* the Idealism of Jesus, "worked out not in abstract theory, but by the unflinching application of a spiritual measure alike to the simplest and to the most mysterious facts of our existence."¹ And to have faith in Jesus is to believe the same truth, to strive to live the same life, and to share in the same unlimited hopes. It is to know that the Best is on our side, and that it must prevail.

In every age of the world the moral consciousness of man has borne witness to this truth. The terms in which it has

¹ E. Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii, p. 151.

often expressed itself may have been inadequate and even secular, and morality and religion may have seemed to stand apart. But the consciousness of being in the right, the indomitable courage with which men have stood in the face of the condemnation of their fellows, their appeal from the narrow judgment of their times to the judgment of history, is the consciousness of being at one with God, and the absolute assurance that though they themselves may fail their cause must prevail. It was the sublime mission of Jesus to teach and to live this truth with a power beyond all others, and to base on a self-negation that was absolute a self-affirmation that knew no bounds. And it has been the character of those who accepted his teaching to show, in times of persecution and of universal fear, the same denial of the narrow self and the same assertion of the self that had been made one with the will of God. Secure in the sense of unity with God, with a God who is love, no combination of tragic circumstances without, no sense of unworthiness and wickedness within, could bring despair.

The idealisation of nature follows; so does the idealisation of all the confused mystery of man's wayward history. There is nought that can finally resist, none who can condemn; for there is nothing that can sunder the unity that comes from the love which is the love of man to God, the love of God to man, the love of God to God in man,—“not tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword.” The self-affirmation of those who believe the idealistic faith of Jesus, and who make it the rule of their lives, is as boundless as that of Jesus himself, and its foundations are as secure.

HENRY JONES.

THE RATIONALITY OF THE INCARNATION.

THE REV. RICHARD MORRIS, B.D.,
Presbyterian Church, Dolgelly.

THE idea of a Divine incarnation obviously depends for its significance on the idea of God which underlies it. According as one's idea of God is pantheistic, polytheistic, or theistic, one's idea of an incarnation of God will assume a corresponding aspect. At present, however, attention will be confined to the Christian idea of incarnation, which claims to be consistent with, and based upon, the theistic idea of God. Is the Christian idea of incarnation rational? It is noteworthy that the special objections to this idea proceed not from without, but from within, the domain of theism. The non-theist is concerned with the campaign more against theism itself than against any of the superstructures built upon it. Moreover, it may even be plausibly contended that some antitheistic theories lend themselves more easily than theism to the erection of superstructures like the one now under discussion. To vindicate the Christian idea of incarnation, then, is to justify the transition from theism to Christianity. Hence it is to the theist that the appeal must be made. To those who dispute the rationality of theism itself, the argument can appeal only indirectly. Thus the question, Is the incarnation rational? resolves itself into another: Is the Christian idea of incarnation consistent with the theistic idea of God?

There are those who would at once dispose of the inquiry

by saying: "The idea is unintelligible, therefore it is irrational." But "unintelligible" is both a relative and an ambiguous term. It is relative: that is to say, its significance varies with the range of the particular intellect concerned. Thus a proposition may be unintelligible to A but intelligible to B; or, again, it may be unintelligible to human beings, but intelligible to finite intellects of a higher order; or, lastly, it may be unintelligible to a finite, but intelligible to an infinite, Intelligence. I shall assume, however, that when the Christian idea of incarnation is asserted to be unintelligible, the meaning intended to be conveyed is that it is unintelligible to the human intellect. Whether or in what sense the assertion, so understood, holds good, I shall presently inquire. But the point just now is that the rationality of an idea is not to be tested by its intelligibility to a finite being. The relative cannot thus be made the criterion of the absolute. For "rational" is an absolute, and not, like "intelligible," a relative, term. An idea may be intelligible to A and unintelligible to B; but it cannot be rational to A and irrational to B. When a proposition is asserted to be irrational, the meaning is that it is contrary, not to A's reason or B's reason, or to human reason in general, but to Reason itself, to absolute Reason—or, as every theist would say, to the Divine Reason. This is the proper use of the words "reason" and "rational," unless they are attended by some qualifying epithet. Unfortunately, this use is not always observed. Thus the well-known distinction between propositions *supra rationem* and propositions *contra rationem*, however valid substantially, is not in these terms happily expressed. No proposition can be *supra rationem* in the sense in which some propositions are *contra rationem*: for *contra rationem* means contrary to absolute reason, while *supra rationem* simply means above human (or, at the utmost, finite) reason.

But "unintelligible," besides being a relative, is also an ambiguous term. It may mean either "wholly unintelligible" or "not wholly intelligible." In which, then, of these two

senses is the assertion, that the Christian idea of incarnation is unintelligible to the human intellect, to be understood? If in the former sense, the assertion is untrue; if in the latter, the assertion is indeed true, but irrelevant and even pointless. Assuredly the Christian idea of incarnation is not wholly unintelligible, like colour to a person born blind, or a book to a person who cannot read. In fact, no idea whatever can possibly be, in this sense, unintelligible. A "meaningless idea" is a contradiction in terms. An idea, to be an idea, must, at the very lowest, mean something to its possessor. And certainly the idea now under discussion has for its upholders not only a definiteness, but also a vast wealth, of content. But even to those who pronounce it irrational, it must have some meaning: for to pronounce it irrational is to dogmatise about it, and one cannot dogmatise about that which is wholly unintelligible. On the other hand, it is the merest truism to say that the Christian idea of incarnation cannot be, to a finite being, wholly intelligible. For this is a defect—if defect it should be called—which this idea shares with every other idea, conceived or conceivable. If a God-Man is a mystery, so also is a "flower in the crannied wall." Not that the two are mysteries of the same order—far from it; but the lower has this in common with the higher, that it can be fully understood only by an infinite Intelligence. "We know in part" is and must remain the last pronouncement of the finite intellect, be the object of knowledge what it may. And inasmuch as the gulf between any finite intellect, or any number of finite intellects, and an infinite Intelligence must itself be infinite,—inasmuch, further, as the complete understanding of any single object involves the complete understanding of every other object,—it follows that the (to human beings) undiscovered portion of the content of any given idea must for ever remain infinitely vaster than the discovered portion. If, then, intelligibility to a finite intellect is made the test of the rationality of an idea, one of two conclusions seems inevitable: either that every idea is rational because every idea is partly

intelligible, or that no idea is rational because no idea is wholly intelligible. Or rather, to speak more accurately, every idea would thus appear to be partly rational and partly irrational, but infinitely more irrational than rational. This, if well founded, would unquestionably have been a serious indictment. Even then, however, its censure would have fallen, not exclusively on ideas which are distinctive of Christianity or of theology, but on all sorts of ideas whatsoever, conceived or conceivable by man.

Moreover, as we cannot dogmatise about the unknown, it is obviously an unwarrantable procedure to charge an idea with irrationality on the ground of its alleged unintelligibility. Such a charge, if it is to be made good, must be founded, not on what is unknown, but on what is known. Only when the meaning of an idea has to some extent been grasped, and discovered to involve some absurdity, can a charge of irrationality against that idea be regarded as established. If, then, the Christian idea of incarnation is to be thus branded, it is entirely irrelevant to refer to the limitless mysteries which the idea admittedly involves. The question is, Does this idea in the non-mysterious portion of its content—the portion which is intelligible and actually understood—present some feature which contradicts the fundamental principles of reason?

Such a feature some claim to find in the very essence of the idea—the union, in one and the same Person, of finiteness and infinity. That the Infinite may indeed hold converse with the finite, may even enter into an alliance with it, the theist will not necessarily—perhaps cannot consistently—deny. But that One Who is infinite may also be finite—that the fulness of Deity may stand enclosed within the ring of humanity—these are propositions which many theists, in the interests even of theism itself, reject as absurd. And truly, if the question is to be approached from the standpoint of the finite, the rejection is amply justifiable. The Christian idea of incarnation must at once be pronounced irrational if its rationality is to depend on the answers to such questions as these: Can the finite expand

itself sufficiently to contain, and develop itself sufficiently to produce, the Infinite? Can a human person attain Divine perfection? Can the stream rise, not only higher, but infinitely higher than its fountain? These questions can be answered only negatively; nor would any Christian theologian dream of answering them otherwise. But the rationality of the incarnation is not thereby affected. For Christian theology approaches the question from the standpoint, not of the finite and of man, but of the Infinite and of God. It is of the very essence of the Christian idea that the incarnation is accomplished by a Divine act. It is the work of God. From the beginning the teaching of the Christian Church has been, that the God-Man is not a growth out of the original tree of humanity, but a branch grafted upon it: not a human person who has taken to himself the nature of God, but a Divine Person Who has taken to Himself the nature of man. Hence the question is, not whether the finite can contain the Infinite, but whether the Infinite can contain the finite; not whether man can ascend to the level of Deity, but whether God can condescend to the level of humanity; not what is possible or impossible to man, but what is possible or impossible to God.

But, it may be urged, that which is logically absurd is indeed impossible even to God. If it is intrinsically impossible that one and the same Person should unite in Himself infinity and finiteness, Deity and humanity, the impossibility remains whether the initiative in the union be ascribed to the Divine coefficient or to the human. It matters not on which of its two sides the antithesis of finiteness and infinity is approached if, after all, the antithesis itself is final and absolute. But is it so? The facts of experience seem to indicate the contrary. The combination of infinity with finiteness, so far from being logically absurd and practically impossible, is precisely what we encounter on all hands. Matter, force, time, space, all supply instances of the union of finite quantity with infinite divisibility. I do not for a moment adduce this union of finiteness and infinity in, for instance, a particle of dust as a

phenomenon parallel, or even analogous, to their union in the God-Man of Christian theology. The particle of dust is brought forward to establish merely this one point—that the antithesis of finiteness and infinity is not so absolute as to preclude the possibility of their meeting in one and the same object. But with the absoluteness of this antithesis there vanishes also the initial objection to the Christian idea of incarnation. There is, then, no *prima facie* case against the rationality of this idea; and it may safely be presumed that no such case can possibly be made out.

This, indeed, is not to say much. It leaves the rationality or irrationality of the idea still an open question. Nevertheless it is an important step gained. It sets the Christian theologian free to adduce other and more positive considerations which tend to show that the idea is not only not demonstrably irrational, but eminently rational.

These considerations may be summed up in one: the affinity—amounting in some degree to homogeneity—which exists between the nature of God and that of man. This affinity Scripture asserts when it teaches that man was made in the image of God. This does not mean that Divinity and humanity are identical—that God is a magnified man and man a miniature God. But it does mean that the nature of God and the nature of man have something in common which is fundamental to both. Inasmuch, however, as the question now under discussion is one of rationality, we must inquire whether the testimony of Scripture on this point—the affinity of the two natures—stands confirmed by reason. If man is, indeed, made in the image of God, it follows that man represents, or at least belongs to, the very highest order of created beings. But, it may be asked, what rational ground is there for supposing this to be the case? On the contrary, is it not essentially irrational to regard man as representing the utmost limit of God's creative capacity? Could not the Almighty create—nay, is it not highly probable that He has created—beings whose superiority to man far transcends man's own superiority

to the lowest of the lower animals? In the face even of such questions, however, the Christian theologian need not hesitate to ascribe finality to man. Human nature exhibits one unmistakable note of finality which at once raises that nature to a place in the highest possible rank of created existences. I refer to man's susceptibility to moral distinctions. No antithesis can be more absolute than that of right and wrong; and since man is a being to whom this antithesis appeals, he has the prerogative of making for himself the all-important choice between absolute good and absolute evil. Upon beings lower than man this prerogative has not been conferred; upon created beings higher than man, if such there be, no higher prerogative can be conferred. Inasmuch, then, as man, on the moral side of his nature, has thus the privilege of living and moving in the sphere of the absolute, the assertion that he is made in the image of God is, on rational grounds, amply justified. This being so, the hypothesis, that in one and the same object Divinity and humanity should be united, so far from being intrinsically incredible, assumes a decided aspect of rationality.

But, it may be objected, the Christian idea of incarnation involves much more than the affinity of the two natures, with their consequent union in one and the same object. It involves the further position, that He in Whom the union has been accomplished is—whatever else He may be—a definite individual member of the human family. This, that Christ is an individual Man among individual men, Christian theology not only admits but emphasises. In this respect the doctrine of His supernatural birth makes no difference. Whether He was born out of the human family or born into it, it is admitted on all hands that He now belongs to it: and belongs to it, not as a pale, abstract generalisation, but as a Unit among units. Now it may be plausibly contended that, while human nature as such is eminently qualified to be the vehicle of a Divine incarnation, no individual member of the human race is qualified so to serve: that human nature is so many-sided,

has such a vast wealth of content, that it cannot exhaust its fulness in one exemplar: and that, consequently, the only rational form which the idea of an incarnation can assume is that which specifies, not a single individual, but the entire human family, as the object in which Divinity and humanity are united. Incarnation in the One *versus* incarnation in the many—such is the issue into which our discussion now resolves itself.

Obviously, the initial argument against the idea of a Divine incarnation in general,—the argument founded upon the alleged absoluteness of the antithesis of finiteness and infinity,—if valid at all, is valid equally whether the incarnation be regarded as accomplished in the One or in the many. That the finite can never, by any process of self-multiplication, reach the infinite is the merest commonplace. The human family can never, even if its increase is to continue throughout eternity, become infinite in number. It will always, at any given point however remote, consist of a limited number of units. If, then, the idea of an incarnation in the One is to be pronounced absurd, the absurdity is neither removed nor lessened by substituting, for the One, millions of millions. Besides, even if an infinitely numerous human family had been a consummation capable of being actually realised, how could an aggregate of finite beings, infinite only in their number, possibly be a fit vehicle for an incarnation of God? Similar considerations apply to the argument, already indicated, which at first sight seems specially directed against the idea of an incarnation in the One. A little reflection will make it evident that this argument also, if valid at all,—this proviso, in both cases, should be borne in mind,—tells equally against the idea of an incarnation in the many. For if human nature, on account of its many-sidedness, cannot exhibit the totality of its content in one exemplar, the mere multiplication of exemplars does not remove this difficulty; unless, indeed, they could be multiplied infinitely—which, once more be it observed, is impossible.

But the idea of an incarnation in the many has, moreover, special difficulties of its own. God is One: how then can He become incarnate in a plurality of existences? He is indivisible: how then can an aggregate of units represent Him? He is self-consistent: how then can He find embodiment in so miscellaneous a compound of all sorts of irreconcilable antagonisms as the entire human race? He is holy: how then can a community, conspicuous by the constant presence and frequent predominance within it of moral evil, constitute an incarnation of Him? He is absolutely, completely, universally perfect: how then can He be represented by that which, at best, is only endlessly progressive? For though it be conceded that moral perfection in the negative sense—the perfection of absolute sinlessness—is attainable by the creature, yet such perfection evidently leaves room for unlimited growth in holiness on its positive side. If, then, there is an incarnation at all, it must be an incarnation, not in the many, but in the One. And even if the idea of an incarnation in the many had been logically admissible, such a phenomenon would have been, after all, practically useless. It is impossible to imagine any function which it could have been designed to serve. An incarnation of God, if it is to have any practical value, must be at any rate, for instance, a revelation of Him. But an incarnation in the many could not possibly constitute such a revelation; not only because the revelation would always remain incomplete, but also because there would be none to profit by it. The individual human being might well ask in despair, How can I, who am but an insignificant link in the stupendous chain of the human race, place myself in a position to survey the entire chain—even if the whole of it had already made its appearance? A revelation in the One is something tangible, which may be grasped and apprehended; a revelation in the many turns out to be, strictly speaking, no revelation at all.

RICHARD MORRIS.

A DIVINE INCARNATION.

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

A FEW years ago I wrote an introduction to Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, in Dent's "Everyman's Library," from which I will quote the initial paragraph; for it will serve as a prelude to this short article, which is written as a contribution to the present discussion on the subject of the relation subsisting between the manhood of Jesus and the Godhead of Christ.

"The nature of man can be regarded from many points of view, and upon it much has been written, without being in any way exhaustive. It is probably true that all subdivision and classification is ultimately only a concession to finite intelligence, but one of the simplest modes of dealing with human nature is to think of it as divided into two regions—the region of the soul with its continuity of transcendental existence, and the region of the body with its physical and terrestrial ancestry. Likewise concerning the nature of Christ, volumes have been written, and the same kind of simplifying treatment has been found useful there also; it can be regarded from the eternal and Divine point of view, being thought of as the Logos which existed before all worlds, and as such can be worked into an elaborate idealistic philosophy, with weighty and beneficent results; or it can be considered from the human point of view, and dealt with as belonging to a being born upon this planet, subject to the difficulties attendant upon partial knowledge and growing powers, and living a life as troubled and as strenuous as any other of the sons of men.

"That something of this latter treatment is necessary for the comprehension of ordinary humanity is obvious to a person of any lucidity who contemplates the development of a

human being from earliest infancy. Writers of all ages have emphasised one or other of these aspects in the life of Jesus Christ, and they are both conspicuous in the New Testament itself."

What is the meaning of Incarnation? Surely the manifestation in time and place of something previously existing—the display in bodily form, for a limited period, of some portion of an eternal spiritual essence.

Existence itself is illimitable and perennial, but its manifestations are local and temporary. Nor is the whole of a spiritual existence ever manifested,—only that which the material employed can be made to subserve. It is so even with the creations of an artist; they exhibit in material form a pre-existent idea, and they do so imperfectly. A symphony does not express the whole conception of the composer. A poet catches glimpses of glories which elude his verse.

So also the idea of an oak tree, with its various phases, its ancestry, its future potentialities, is far larger than any actual manifestation, whether in winter or in summer. A "flower in a crannied wall" is an incarnation which is in intimate touch with the whole universe. And shall not the spirit of a man be larger and greater than that which animates his body and enters his consciousness?

It is customary with a certain not perfectly orthodox school of psychology to speak of the non-incarnate and supplementary portion of a human being as his "subliminal self," the portion which is beyond or beneath or above the threshold of his ordinary consciousness. I do not say that "self" is the right term; "self" may best designate the conscious and individualised portion only, and not the hypothetical whole. But it is to the thing, rather than to the term used to denote it, that I direct attention, to a larger and dominant entity, belonging to us in some sense, or rather to which we belong, which is still behind the veil so far as planetary existence is concerned—the self which has not entered into the region of present consciousness,—an accumulation of

powers and insight, of which the ordinary uninspired man is unaware, but to which the genius has moments of access.

The existence of this larger and permanent self, of which what we ordinarily know as our selves is but a fragment,—not anything divine, but greater than humanity—is the working hypothesis to which facts have driven psychological experimentalists. And it is in harmony with the intuitions of seers, from Plato to Wordsworth,—ay, and including Tennyson also ; for does he not speak of life here as lasting

“Till that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home” ?

Given this hypothesis as a working clue, the episodes of birth and of death present no fundamental difficulty. Without it—with the necessity of supposing that the soul originated a few years back, especially if it does not cease a few years hence—the difficulties are insuperable. In default of the idea of permanent existence and temporary incarnation, a sudden origin at some given moment has to be assumed—a moment which it is impossible rationally to specify—instead of the gradual age-long process of evolution.

Let us make the hypothesis and proceed.

Each of us is greater than we know. We have our roots in an infinite past, not only in the bodies of our ancestors, but in the region of mind or spirit as well ; we claim a transcendental existence, some part of which began to assume a temporary and local habitation at conception, and so gradually entered more and more fully into relation with matter, as the organism developed into fitness for it and harmony with it. No sudden entrance into flesh need be supposed, nor need the exit be sudden. Gradual bodily decadence, as the soul gradually begins to resume its immaterial existence, is the normal and healthy condition. Terrestrial life remains an episode of surpassing interest and importance, but is not begun and ended by anything of the nature of creation and destruction, merely by organisation and disorganisation ; it is an episode of individualisation through bodily growth and

experience; it is the attainment of personality of a definite kind by association with matter, with reminiscences of bodily life and activity never thenceforth to be effaced.

This is the experience through which every son of man must pass. It is this which transmutes any spirit into a human being. It is the process by which any spirit must enter into relation and sympathy and corporate union with humanity.


Christianity tells us that a Divine Spirit—that the Deity himself, indeed—went through this process in order to make himself known to man, and also in order fully to realise the conditions and limitations of the free beings which, through evolution, had gradually been permitted to exist. It teaches us that, among all the lofty Spirits which ever became incarnate on the earth, one supremely Divine Spirit entered our flesh and walked on the planet for a time, was born, loved, suffered, and died, even as one of us.

And this individualised and human aspect of the eternally Divine Spirit we know as Jesus of Nazareth, a man like ourselves, save that the glory of that lofty Spirit shone through the fleshly covering and preserved it from the load of sin which follows from inadequate knowledge, imperfect insight, animal ancestry, and an alien will. His Spirit, as St Paul says, already “helpeth our infirmity,” and displays the first-fruits of its activity in the adoption—the redemption of our body; thus making atonement between grades of existence, and raising the whole man, from the animal kingdom, up towards the Divine.

Through the incarnate Jesus we were made aware of the existence and reality of some Divine attributes which, being too simple for our imagination, were otherwise beyond us. By that means, too, he attained personal comprehension of human conditions and temptations, and became our accessible and intimate friend. Through that manifestation we beheld his glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And the lofty Spirit thus partially revealed to us, the Being

which existed before all worlds, the Logos which was with the Father from all eternity, and without whom nothing exists—this infinite and omnipresent Being, we speak of as the Eternal Christ. His influence is in the hearts of men, his Spirit will more and more rule the world; and at his second coming—at the infusion of his Spirit, not again vivifying the body of a Galilean peasant, but dominating and inspiring the whole human race—all nations of the earth will be blessed.

 OLIVER LODGE.

THE JESUS OF HISTORY AND THE CHRIST OF RELIGION.

THE REV. CANON HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND.

CHRISTIANITY begins with "the Christ." It takes its rise in a Christology. That is the vital point to apprehend.

For Christianity has not begun as a religion until it (1) exists in the form of a new power of life, and (2) has made a claim to universality. And neither of these is included within the four corners of the historical career of Jesus. Not until after His death had He ceased to be bound within His racial limitations; nor had He the authority to liberate this new life. So He Himself always declared, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That was the world within which he should circumscribe His mission on earth. "Wait until ye shall be endued with power from on high." That is the ultimate prophecy in which the Gospel story is closed.

Nothing, then, had happened, during His life here, that would account for these new conditions. While He was alive, the Kingdom had not come: "the Holy Ghost," in the decisive words of the Fourth Gospel, "did not yet exist" in our experience. Nothing had yet happened that could account for the rise of the Christian faith.

As a fact, the faith which had been roused by the career lay impotent, broken, despairing, in the dust, on the day when the career reached its tragic close. That faith had been ardent and sincere; but it mixed up true and false ideals; it had

never really understood what was going forward. Even on the last night it showed a total incapacity to grasp the Master's meaning. And now that the blow had come, it had gone utterly to pieces. It had lost all confidence. It had nothing in it which could survive the catastrophe. There was no base on which to rear a religion. There was no inspiration in which to proclaim a Gospel. The Cross had staggered the disciples. They had no hope left in their cause. The shattered life of the Lord only rose into significance in the light of their faith in the Resurrection.

Christianity, then, found its originating impulse outside the limits of the Gospel story. Its faith was focussed on a spot beyond death. It existed to declare a fact which had its seat in Heaven. The fact upon which it built was expressed for it under the terms of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God. It is from that high Throne that He discharges this Power, the Holy Spirit, which men could see and hear. Without that Power there was no Gospel. For without that Power there could be no deliverance for man out of his moral impotence. The manifestation and confession of this impotence had been the sole supreme result of the preaching of the Baptist. Man could do nothing until he was baptized by the Fire of the Spirit. Until the Fire fell upon him and transfigured him, he was still arrested where the Baptist left him. And nothing that Jesus said or did, while He moved about among men doing good, set free the energising Fire.

Pentecost is the actual birthday of the Christian religion, and Pentecost involved all that is contained in the familiar rhythms of the Pauline Christology: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: for in that He died, He

died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That is said, no doubt, in the full freedom of acquired and deliberate articulation. Not at once could it have been so vividly and decisively expressed. But the mystery which the terms cover was not something reached later in the day, on reflection, by the conscious working of the Apostle's dialectic. On the contrary, it was the fundamental corner-stone on which the entire existence of the original Faith depended. Without it, there was nothing for apostles to preach, or for men to believe. It is impossible to impute it to the theological position taken up by St Paul, for not only is it clear from the manner with which he introduces it that he is handling matter absolutely familiar and habitual to every conceivable believer, but it simply asserts or reiterates the immediate and primal signification of the baptismal rite. And without baptism there was no Christ. The good news lay just in this—that in the death of the Christ all men had died to their old sinful impotence; and that in His resurrection to life all had risen in the power of that new life which He sent down upon them from His Throne of glory. At the very door, therefore, of the Church, this was the statement to be encountered. No man could enter in, except through this door. For baptism was simply the dramatic rehearsal of this one vital fact. No one could be baptized without understanding that He had died into Christ's death, and had come up out of the water possessed of the risen and glorified life. This, and this alone, constitutes the salvation offered him. Unless this was assumed and accepted, baptism was unmeaning, and "the assembly of the First-born" could not account for itself. The Church of Christ could never have come into being on any less developed creed than this.

It is important to recall this, and with some reiteration, because, of course, it disposes entirely of the imagination always haunting us, that, somehow, the Gospel Story by itself

will adequately explain the origin of Christianity ; so that by reading and teaching the Synoptic story of the life of Jesus on earth we have got to the heart of all that really matters, and have given to children the vital substance of the Faith.

In reality, the origin of Christianity is to be found at a period after the life had closed ; and the substance of the faith had not yet been touched, except symptomatically, prophetically, allusively, under the limits set for the Synoptic writers.

The heart and core of the Creed lay in this absolute identification of the believer with the Being of Christ, so that "he lived in Christ." His "life was hid with Christ in God." He had no other life but that which Christ lived in him. Christ had died, and in that death he too, the believer, was dead. Christ was alive at God's right hand, and now he who believed in Him lived by the force of that Spirit of His by which they had been re-born. These terms are familiar as household words, to everyone who has been baptized. St Paul refers to them as to truisms which have long been the commonplace of the Christian's life. "Know ye not?" he cries. "Of course" (he implies) "you know it. If you do not know *that*, you have not begun to know Christ. But you do know it ; and, therefore, you know that 'You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit.' " He may be throwing the truth into his own words, with a force and clearness all his own ; but he is obviously and certainly appealing to the common, undeniable, intimate facts of their daily experience. Everyone is aware of what he means. No one can dispute the obligations that he enforces.

The historical incidents, then, of the career of Jesus have already received their full mystical transfiguration as factors of universal significance and of everlasting validity, from the first moment that we encounter Christianity in existence at all. Its primal presentation of itself as an object for faith was in the form of the assertion : "In Christ's death all died ; in Christ's exaltation all are made alive."

Christianity began, then, as Christology.

But now comes the extraordinary thing. The body of believers, which had completely assimilated the mystical assumptions on which St Paul lays such emphatic stress, turned its attention back upon the historical career of its Master and Lord, and produced and adopted three specially sanctioned records of what had actually taken place.

We need not enter on the vexed question as to how they were produced, or where, or when, or by whom. It is enough for our present purpose that their production, in their present form, most certainly followed long after the Christological interpretation of the Life lived had assumed its full Pauline articulation. It is perfectly obvious that the ground-verities of the great Epistles form the unquestioned deposit of faith of which the Church rests absolutely assured. We can see how the Apostle counts on it as invariably accepted, so that he may, by appeal to it, all the more confidently work up towards his own more controversial position. He is obviously anxious, in view of the difficult matter which he has in hand, to exhibit his entire conformity with the grounds familiar to everyone who bears the name of Christ. The whole Church, then, assumes the death of Jesus Christ to be the one sacrificial act in which the story of entire humanity receives its interpretation, its justification, and its consummation. In it the mystery pre-determined from Creation is made manifest. On the Cross is displayed the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is absolutely certain that this is how the believer regards it.

And yet, in the full light of this tremendous Creed, they produce out of the heart of the believing body the Synoptic record. The very same people, that is, who hold the Christological faith, put together and accept the record, that we have in our hands, of the historical Jesus. In this record they allow no sign to appear of this, their mystical Creed. They never permit it to intrude upon the facts, or to offer itself to the attention of the reader.¹

¹ I owe much of this to Richmond's *The Gospel in the Epistles*. I would specially invite attention to his Preface.

Criticism, of course, can detect a few phrases that have been coloured by after-experiences. But the very minuteness and subtlety of these slight transformations only serve to make more amazing the entire omission from the story of the deep truths in the consciousness of which both its writers and its readers live.

Not a word, yet, to tell of the life in Christ. Not a word to report the actual experience of the new life in the Spirit. The mystery now revealed, of the admission of the Gentiles, is wholly reserved. It is suggested in the last parables, but only prophetically. It will follow the rejection of the final offer. When the holders of the vineyard have, at last, slain even the heir himself, the vineyard will be taken from them and given unto others. But, as things now stand, during the life the offer is still being made to the men of the Old Covenant. It is Jerusalem on which the heart of the Son of Man is set. He has no other goal for His efforts. He would father its children. He is sent but to the lost sheep of Israel. Not even into the villages of the Samaritans are His preachers to enter. His own life is lived strictly on Jewish lines: within the limitations of the law; in attendance upon the feasts; in careful accord with all the social traditions of the Covenanted People. Obviously, there had been nothing in their daily intimacy with Him to prepare the disciples nearest His mind and heart for the break with the manner of living prescribed by the Mosaic Law, which so quickly became for them the burning question of the hour.

Never did the Church of Christ pass through a more terrific crisis than that which wrenched it out of its ancient habits, divinely sanctioned, and flung it out to take any social shape which Gentilism might require of it. We know how the violence of that crisis shook it to its very foundation; how fierce was the heat of the furnace through which St Paul forced it to pass. Yet not one touch of the scorching flames leaves its mark on the actual Gospel story. It goes on as if no such crisis had ever occurred. Just one note in St Mark invites

passing attention to it. But, otherwise, the story, as told, bears no traces of the tremendous conflict. Instead, it is left in a form in which it must inevitably have told on the wrong side ; or, at least, lent itself readily and forcibly to hostile use. For those who claimed authoritative permanence for the Mosaic Law might well appeal to the Master's example on earth. He had most certainly conformed, Himself. He had never for an instant adopted Gentile uses. He had obviously not prepared His disciples for abandoning the ancient customs, since they could quote nothing of His to justify it, and were themselves as perplexed and startled as anyone at the revolution asked of them. Still, in spite of the risk of damaging their own cause, they stuck to the facts ; they told the old story just as it had been enacted ; they left it shut up in its racial limitations, in its national type. They were not afraid to report words that might easily make trouble, such as : "Think not that I have come to destroy the law. Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, or shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." The man who wrote this, and the Church which adopted it, had, nevertheless, long ago accepted the Pauline dialectics. They were dead to the Law by the very act by which they were alive to Christ. Yet this did not affect their report, as they looked back to the old days.

Take, again, their intellectual situation. At the time in which they wrote out this story of Jesus, they were faced night and day by invading Hellenism. Gnostic theosophies were struggling to absorb them. Speculative idealism was hard at work on their Christ in His mystical character, as the consummation of creation and the ideal of humanity. Yet not a breath of this urgent influence passes across the scene of the Life. Not a word, not a syllable, is even remotely tinged by Gentile thought. These speculations, now so enthralling and so difficult and so perilous, are not permitted to appear

for one instant on the horizon within which the Master works out His career. Is not this noteworthy? Is not this amazing?

Look, again, at the careful record of the death-scene. The author of the Third Gospel is now certified by criticism to be the man whom we always thought that he was. And St Luke most assuredly had drunk in the entire Christology of his great patient. For him, the Cross meant that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Whom God hath set forth to be a justification through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past. If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him; that the body of sin may be destroyed." So he certainly held, in express and conscious terms; yet, for all that, he can take the entire story, from end to end of its long agony, as a simple historical incident in the career of Jesus, without the remotest hint that it means to him so much more. No one who did not know could guess that the eternal issues of the world's redemption were shut within that terrible time. Yet the writer certainly believed it; and his readers as certainly felt it. For them, and for him, there was no hint of variance or of conflict between the Eternal Christ who offered the sacrifice to God, and the Jesus of Nazareth who was done to death by wicked men. On the contrary, it was faith in the Christ that lent its breathless significance to every tiny detail in the facts of the human tragedy. Because they believed in Him as Christ, the Son of God, therefore they found a priceless value in the narration of each accident that befell the Son of Man.

Now, it is this fusion of the double interests that constitutes our riddle. We want to understand why, far from the adoration of the Christ wiping out their interest in the racial limitations of the life of Jesus, it should have intensified for them

the necessity of recalling it exactly as it had happened, with all its inner meaning veiled, with its main spiritual significance still postponed and unrealised.

Do we feel as if the two conceptions are in hopeless collision, as Mr Roberts, in his article, vehemently argues? Then that only shows how far we must be from understanding the mind of those who wrote and read our Synoptic Gospels. To stop short in this apparent collision is, simply, to confess that we can find no answer to the riddle that we are set to solve. For the riddle is—Why did those who wrote those Gospels *not* feel the collision which afflicts us? They passed smoothly from one conception to the other. They looked for the Christ in the Jesus, and found what they looked for. They saw nothing inadequate in the bare narration of the facts of a limited human life and death. For them, those facts, as facts, without stretching them, without forcing them, constituted the mystical deed by which humanity in Christ won its eternal propitiation and glory. The identity for them was absolutely complete. We know this through the manner in which these Gospels came into existence. They were written in order to satisfy the needs of those who believed in the Christ; and, as is proved by the event, they did, as a fact, give the desired satisfaction. The later the date at which they were written, the more convincing is this argument.

What, then, was the reason of this harmony, of this satisfaction? Why did this plain Synoptic story of Jesus meet precisely the needs of the believers in the Christ?

Well, perhaps we do not sufficiently remember that almost the first perilous pressure that fell upon the faith came from the over-spiritualising tendencies of the Docetæ. The Church found itself quickly an object of passionate interest to swarms of Hellenistic Idealists, Oriental Theosophists, Gnostic Spiritualists. These all fastened on the Christ as the possible solution of intellectual dilemmas, as the speculative centre to their cosmogonies. They approached Him from the side of the speculative reason, looking for primal ideas and first principles.

Now, from the side of reason, facts are but the symbols of ideas—the phenomenal and temporary illustration of principles. Reason pushes them aside, in order to pass through to the intellectual reality which they suggest and veil and disguise. Facts drop off, as the husks. They belong to the external, material presentation, which is but an unreal appearance. To all such inquirers, the Christ, or the Word, the Idea, was everything; Jesus was but the transitory medium through which the truth was conveyed. “The Christ” can never have actually died. His appearance in the flesh was but an illusion.

Do we fancy that it was left to us, in our day, to feel the force of this antithesis, or to invent the distinction between the idea and the form in which the idea historically took shape? It was this very perplexity with which the Church of the first century was challenged almost from its birth. It is to be found at work already in the early epistles of St Paul. And it was in recoil under this challenge that the Church understood the emphasis with which the great teacher, whom it believed to be the Apostle St John, insisted that the test of all true faith lay in believing that Jesus Christ had come “*in the flesh.*”

“In the flesh”: that was the cardinal verity. And why was it so crucial? Why did it signalise a radical difference between them and the Gnostics? Because they had come to the Truth, not along Hellenistic, but Hebraistic, lines; and that means that they approached God from the point of view of the will, not of the reason. They looked for God to manifest Himself, not in ideas, but in acts. God was revealed by what He did. Through His actions, they might read His mind, they might interpret His character. But the knowledge so gained was given, not to solve any speculative problem, not to satisfy intellectual curiosity, but simply in order to establish a practical relationship, to bring God and man together in moral alliance, to knit them into a living friendship. It was given, not for its scientific interest, but in order to

evoke gratitude, trust, confidence, love. God had a will towards man. He had a purpose for man to fulfil. On man's behalf, this will had come into play; this purpose had been achieved in act. God had put out power in man's behalf. He had brought to pass a great act of deliverance. This is the mystery now disclosed. This is the revelation.

And, if so, then facts are everything. They are not symbols of an idea, which can be dropped when once the idea is apprehended. They are the real material in which the thing was done. They are the actual embodiment of the will. The will only comes to itself in and by the acts in which it is realised. The love of God is only to be known and felt in the sacrifices that it has actually once for all made. These are its pledges, its proofs, its sacraments, itself. Love is what it does. So God's love for man is inseparably identified with the fact that He sent His Son to die for man. By believing in that fact, you believe in the Eternal Love. You cannot really believe in the Eternal Love, except by believing that it actually valued your life at that cost. Every impulse that leads you to trust and adore the Divine Will, heightens the worth and intensifies the significance of the facts through which the Will has found expression.

These were the presuppositions which underlay all Hebrew thought; and on these the Church fell back, under the challenge of Docetism, in her effort to recapture and to preserve the memories of the previous and preparatory career which, perhaps, for a time seemed to the believers themselves to be swallowed up in the absorbing revelation of the glory which had followed it.

Under the influence of this Hebraistic mood and mind, it fastened on the reality of the earthly manifestations through the flesh. It was in and through the flesh that Jesus won, asserted, verified, and revealed His right to be the Christ, and His claim to rise and reign. Those days in the flesh had now received their true valuation. Far from having lost importance, they had immeasurably gained it. For in them the deed

was done by which humanity was re-created. If the recreation is to be real, then the facts and acts by which it was achieved were real.

How little the eye-witnesses had seen at the time what was going forward ! “They understood none of these things ; and the thing was hid from them.” That was the wonder of it. That was the note that rang through their recollection. Therefore they delight, now, in going back to the old facts just as they were when they understood none of them. They show Jesus rigidly circumscribed within local, narrow limits, living as a Jew would live, occupied with a Jew’s questions, held within Jewish associations and horizons, bounded by a Jew’s experiences. He talks as Jews talk. He speaks as with the knowledge that any Jew might possess. He refers to diseases in the Jews’ manner. He moves within the circle of Jewish hopes and feelings. The whole Gentile outlook is shut off from Him, except it be through some Roman centurion who astonishes Him by his faith, or through some Syro-Phœnician woman who forces her way in upon Him. Now, as they write the record, that Jewish life had passed entirely into the far past, these Jewish questions had ceased to have a meaning, the hidden Gentilism was their very breath and being. Yet Jesus, the Jew, under those Jewish limitations, was, then and there, in the act of winning His authority to be the whole world’s Christ. That is what made these old incidents so vital, so fascinating. Back, therefore, to the facts, as facts, the writers turned the believers’ eyes.

I have been speaking hitherto only of the Synoptists ; but I should like to note here that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is prompted by motives identical with theirs. He, too, has for his main note, “back to the fact ; back to the narrow, circumscribed facts ; back to old local, Jewish conditions, Jewish problems, Jewish debates, in the days when we understood so little of what was meant.” True, this author opens with a deliberate rehearsal of the full Creed—just such a Creed as the Synoptic writers assumed without

expressing. But this Creed only drives him back, with a keener interest, on to the facts in which it had, once for all, embodied itself; and though he may, again and again, introduce the comments of a later experience and of a fuller knowledge, yet he distinctly professes how little of this they knew at the time. Only when He had risen did they remember. Even that famous ride into Jerusalem recalled no memory of Zechariah at the time. They did not see it all until long afterwards. And, still, he loves to remember things just as they were when this meaning was hidden from them. He has a positive delight in historical facts, for their own sake. How has this ever been doubted? Who can possibly read the seventh and eighth and ninth chapters of the Fourth Gospel without recognising the temper of a man to whom incidents and details appeal instinctively, just because they are what they are? Otherwise, what conceivable interest could he have in unearthing and relating all the long-forgotten ebb and flow of local Messianic expectations, which had swayed a mixed crowd in the streets of Jerusalem so long ago? The subtle variations of the expectations had ceased to have any present significance, or even any meaning, for those to whom he wrote. They belonged to a provincial life which had been swept off the face of the earth. To his envioning Gentile hearers they were sheer, dead antiquarianism. Yet, to the writer, they had been an experience, and that was enough. They were part of the fact, of the actual story, and were invaluable for that reason only. Not a scrap of the mere accidental incidents of the blind man's healing can he afford to let go. It is so profoundly interesting to him, just because that is the way it all happened, in the old, old days when no one understood. How real it was! How intensely human! How actual! How positive! That is what made it so precious to him. It was as vivid to him as the very scene in which he told it, with his Greek hearers clustered round him. That is exactly what happened when Jesus Christ came in the flesh. He had seen him since, so he thought, as the Exalted

Christ, with eyes as a flaming fire, and a sword going from his mouth, and a voice like the sound of many waters, when he had fallen at his feet as one dead. Yet this vision had only deepened the devotion with which he clung to the exact and precise details of those other days, when he had eaten and drunk with Jesus, and lain on His bosom at supper. He is the Word: He is the Christ; but He is known to be these just because He came in flesh and blood, and was touched, and seen, and handled, and watched, and known as Jesus, the Word made flesh, in whose flesh they behold, slowly and with discipline, the light as of the Only-begotten from the Father.

This was the mind, then, of the Gospel writers.

And if we complain of the narrow outlook to which this Jesus, born under the law, was of necessity confined; if we are staggered by His limitation to a Jew's science and a Jew's psychology; then again the Hebrew's distinctive mode of thought may come to our rescue. From the point of view of Hellenistic intellectualism, this limitation may seem deplorable; but regarded as an exhibition of the will to redeem, and of the purpose of Divine Love, every such limitation is a new proof of the thoroughness with which the purpose was achieved; of the reality with which love made its sacrifice; of the complete and unshrinking identification of God's life with man; of the intense and masterful effort by which God laid Himself actually alongside our story and inside our experience, and was found in the very fashion of a man, just as man is, just as his history has made him to be, just as the historical facts require. The more complete the humiliation, the more divine is the sacrifice. The narrower the limitations accepted, the more limitless the love that accepts. The Christ shirked nothing of that which is ours. "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." Only by being utterly ours, our very own, under our historic conditions, as Jesus, son of Mary, was He empowered to become, not one man among many, but the only Man who has ever been wholly man; the only Man who has ever carried

manhood up into its own fulness of consummation; the only Man who has made manifest all that man can ever be; the only Man who has summed up in Himself the secret of that Sonship which is the impulse under which humanity for ever moves forward, and the final goal towards which its hope is set.

His reality as Jesus in the flesh is the measure of His capacity to be the Christ.

H. S. HOLLAND.

ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE REV. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

I TRUST I may say without offence what I take to be profoundly true and germane to the question, that this separation of the Jesus of History from the Christ of Religion all springs from the original sin of Protestantism, the separation of those two in one flesh, Christ and His Church. To treat our Saviour as an antiquity, to ignore the Church, His living presentation and complement (*pleroma*), is to start any inquiry as to His position in the world at the wrong end. It is quitting a full table to feed on scraps. There is more to be known about Jesus of Nazareth by studying His word as preached and His life as lived in the Church of to-day than by searching the records of primitive Christianity. You do not understand what you find there unless you know how it is continually being fulfilled all around you still. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." The Christ of Religion is the Jesus of History continued in His Church. To know what manner of man He was, certainly we must read the Gospel records—read and meditate and contemplate, as seeing the events spiritually happening before our eyes; but we must likewise study the lives of His saints and be familiar with good Christian men; for such as in character and *ethos* they were and are, so was He at Nazareth and in Jerusalem. He is the cause of their being what they are: now the first step in investigating the cause of any phenomenon is accurately to discern the phenomenon itself. The stranger to Christ

reproduced in His Church is sure to misread the written history of Jesus.

No blame attaches to the Rev. R. Roberts for not knowing what, I presume, has never come in his way—the spirit and belief of Catholics and the theology of the Catholic Church. Yet, however inculpable this ignorance, his argument suffers by it. He assumes, for instance, as a thing quite certain, that there never was such a thing as diabolical possession. There are Catholic priests who could assure him that they have met with it in their own experience by unmistakable signs. The Church still ordains exorcists; and occasionally, with caution and by permission of the bishop of the diocese, the possessed are solemnly exorcised. Then for miracles the uniformity of nature is not denied by Catholic theologians there where alone science is conversant with it, that is, in the action of brute agents: the Church, however, asserts that there are agents above the brute, as is the will of man, and even above the human, as are the angels and God. A miracle is merely the intervention of a Higher Power: now there is no law of nature that there shall be no Higher Powers, nor again that, being such, they shall never intervene. Whether they do or do not intervene cannot be determined *a priori*. It remains to be proved by wide observation, and by the setting aside of every instance alleged to the contrary, that nothing ever happens anywhere but what can be accounted for by the action of brute agencies or of the will of man. Critics expunge miracles from the life of the Jesus of History, not in virtue of any such scientific induction, for the induction is not yet complete, and it is proverbially hard to prove a negative, but by arbitrary assumption. We call upon those critics to toe the line of their own scientific canon. It is not proved, I say, that the Jesus of History was no wonder-worker. Records, admitted to be fairly contemporary, allege that He was. There is no inconsiderable body of testimony to the effect that miracles have not ceased in His Church. They mark Him and His. I have heard of faith-healing and spiritual-

istic manifestations, but that subject is too large for this paper.

Mr Roberts will not allow us to explain our Lord's apparent ignorance by the doctrine of *Kenosis*. But then he has not grasped the Catholic conception of *Kenosis*. The term in the mouth of a Catholic theologian does not mean that our Lord as man, in His mortal life, really was ignorant, fallible, weak, defenceless; on the contrary, He had ever at His command all the wisdom and power of God, "more than twelve legions of angels," to call upon as He wished. It does not touch so much His inner consciousness as His outward behaviour.¹ When there was question of making display of Himself before mankind, ordinarily He would not. *Kenosis* in Him was the avoidance of everything *showy*, except on rare occasions, *e.g.* the Transfiguration. It was the maintenance of an habitual incognito, so far as outward mien went. It was the keeping back of treasures of wisdom which He was not there and then prepared to lay out before the vulgar gaze, the terms of His mission to men not so requiring. Mr Roberts thinks that if our Saviour had known anything of Greek philosophy He must have brought it out. He never showed the faintest trace of acquaintance with the lore of Plato and Socrates. Therefore he was no philosopher, and, being no philosopher, could not have been God. Such is the destructive syllogism proceeding from our Lord's silence—a silence which Catholics take for reticence, while opponents will have it to mean ignorance. Science, however, is always mistrustful of that *a priori* conditional "must have." The like syllogism was made in the closing scene of our Saviour's own lifetime: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." He must have come down from the cross, had He been able. He did not come down: the consequence is clear. To make that

¹ True, by *Kenosis* He surrendered Himself to suffering and agony, but not to helplessness. Any moment He could have flung suffering far from Him, and that was what He was sorely tempted to do in the Garden. But ignorance is helplessness.

sylogism valid, however, it should have been shown that the only possible explanation of His not coming down was His inability. So now it should be evinced that the only possible explanation of the Prophet of Nazareth showing not the least tincture of Greek culture was His profound ignorance of everything that had taken place in Greece. But Catholic theologians have another explanation, which is that also of St Paul (Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8; *cf.* Col. ii. 3).

What I have to say on the main issue comes to this:—

1. The Jesus of History claimed to be the Christ. By “the Christ” I mean the Christ of Religion.
2. His claim was admitted in His lifetime.
3. His ignominious death, which seemed to have extinguished His claim, has validated and confirmed it all the world over, and throughout all ages even from the first. *Regnavit a ligno.*
4. He has done the work of Christ.
5. He is sole claimant. If He be not the Christ, then there is no Christ.

§§ 1, 2. At the outset of the argument it is necessary to define my controversial position in reference to the books of the New Testament. Never have documents been attacked with greater subtlety and vehemence: at the end of forty years’ fighting they have emerged in the main victorious; their essential value has been proved as it never had been proved before. No doubt there are men who think otherwise. It is always possible to deny the remote, and to clinch your denial with some plausibility. You may have succeeded in having “won your way into the irrefutable beyond belief,” as Thucydides would have said. But there you may be left, and are better left, out of action. Greek grammar rules have ere now been substantiated by excising “clerical errors to the contrary” from the manuscripts of Plato and Thucydides. “This will never do,” “Mark can’t have written that,” “anyhow it didn’t happen,”—is that science or self-will?

At His trial before Caiaphas, Jesus, as St Mark reports, met the High Priest's question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" by saying distinctly "I am." The High Priest rent his garments, and cried blasphemy. But it would not have been blasphemy had the Prisoner signified merely such divine sonship as belonged to every member of the chosen race, "who are Israelites, whose is the adoption" (Rom. ix. 4). He meant much more, and the Court understood Him to mean much more. He threatened "coming with the clouds of heaven." Now the cloud, to Jewish notions, was everywhere the emblem of divine glory. The Synoptic account of the trial entirely tallies with what we read in the Fourth Gospel: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." He claimed divine honours, not there and then indeed, but saying that they should be paid to Him hereafter for what He was even then. In the long account of the Last Judgment in the pages of the three Synoptics, Jesus appears as the King, the Judge of all the earth, which was the recognised function of Jehovah. In the Sermon on the Mount He adds clauses of His own ("But I say to you," etc.) to the law of the Most High. None of the prophets durst have done that.

It will be said: "The position of the Christ of Religion grew and was magnified in the course of ages." It did not take ages to grow: it was ample and majestic at the end of the first century, in the lifetime of some who had lived with Him. The pages of St John and St Paul proclaim at least that much. But grow as the position might, it could not grow beyond making a God of Jesus; and that Jesus did Himself for Himself, and His followers accepted His Divinity. That may be argued even from the Synoptics, though of course it is most apparent in the pages of the Fourth Gospel. This is not the place to discuss the Fourth Gospel. I will content myself with saying that it is all of a piece with the other three. It fits in with them, it completes them, it is their proper *pleroma*. If the Synoptics are the

cape, the Fourth Gospel is the hood; and cape and hood together fit exactly one Person.

One word about the tenderness which the Christ of Religion is conceived to display towards man, certainly not without awakening a response in the hearts of those who believe in Him. Will it be argued that this is a fruit of mediævalism, that the Jesus of History did not make much of His followers, or stand for much in their affections? Hardly, if we are to believe the sixth, tenth, thirteenth and fifteenth chapters of St John. But that is Fourth Gospel. Anyhow, it is not mediæval. Then there is the Johannine passage in St Matthew (xi. 25–30), excised, I believe, by some critics as savouring too much of John. But what of St Paul, “Who shall separate us,” etc.? (Rom. xi. 35). St Paul certainly did not live with Jesus on earth, yet he comes sufficiently close for us to argue that, in respect of the passionate loyalty which He evoked, the Christ of Religion, as soon as He appears, is the exact replica of the Jesus of History. The Beloved Disciple, who leant on His Master’s breast, felt no otherwise towards Him that did St Paul.

§ 3. The ignominy of the Crucifixion was dispelled by faith in the Resurrection. Easter Sunday proclaimed the Good Friday defeat a great triumph. On no point are they who *dissolve Jesus* (1 John iv. 3, according to Vulgate and “ancient authorities” in margin of R.V.) into an historical personage and an object of faith, more clamorous than in proclaiming that the Resurrection does not belong to history. The historical evidence, they will have it, is not clear enough to carry credence for an event so unparalleled in experience. Let us have apparitions, ghostly appearances, by all means, but no reanimation of the corpse, no coming forth alive from the sepulchre, no escape from the corruption of death. This allegation, all must admit, is made in the teeth of existing documents, which expressly set aside the notion of the ghost walking while the body was decomposing in the tomb (Luke

xxiv. 37-39; Acts ii. 31). Likewise in the teeth of this fact, that, sufficient or insufficient, the evidence satisfied those to whom it was immediately addressed and who were on the spot to verify it. It satisfied the Apostles, and in the mouth of the Apostles it satisfied the whole world. When doubts were thrown, it was not on the resurrection of Jesus, but on our resurrection after Him (1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18); and His resurrection, undenied, served St Paul as the argument of ours. The resurrection of their Master, most unlikely-looking of all facts, was placed by the Apostles in the van and front of all their teaching (Acts i. 22; ii. 32; iv. 33; xiii. 30, 31; xvii. 31). What their gospel was at Athens, that it was all the world over: "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts xvii. 18). And the world received that gospel. Now if the word had been carried first to Celts and Scythians, and they had come over, and the rest of the world after them, it would have been readily argued that the belief in the Resurrection was fostered in a nidus of credulity, or in what Plato called "a slough of barbarism," and only when it had grown great there did it by its mere greatness, and the enthusiasm which a great movement begets, prevail with the rest of mankind. But it was not so. The Apostles carried the doctrine of the Resurrection straight into the most incredulous provinces of the Roman Empire, straight into Greater Greece (Asia Minor) and Greece proper. "Why not try Egypt first?" we might have suggested to St Paul. "In that mummy-preserving land there is some tradition of the dead living again; but the Platonic philosophy, as you know, entertains a theoretical hatred of the body, and takes it to be the reward of the best soul to be rid of so cumbersome a companion once and for ever.¹ Besides, the Greek is the greatest sceptic born: Hellenism in all ages you will find to be a solvent to faith."

¹ It must be confessed that this objection was pretty well got over by St Paul's presentation of "a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44). There was also one side of the Greek character to which the doctrine of resurrection did strongly appeal: that was their admiration of youthful beauty, and regret for its speedy decay, on which Euripides has a suggestive choral ode, *Hercules Furens*, 637 seq.

Nevertheless, at Ephesus and Corinth the resurrection of Jesus was believed. The saying of Æschylus, the universal experience of mankind, "*Of man once dead no resurrection*,"¹ was for this one case set aside, and the very exception proved the Risen One unique in origin. The Greek was master of the best science of his age, to say nothing of his philosophy and mental acumen, not yet surpassed. Science has made great progress since, but it has added nothing to the certainty expressed by Job, that though there be hope for a dry root if you water it, a man once dead rises not again, and his place shall know him no more. That has not grown more certain with the march of ages. Job was as sure of it as any M.D. of the University of London.

It says much for evidence if it has convinced keen critical contemporaries in spite of every unlikelihood. But—a point that I have not seen dwelt upon before—in the Gospels and Acts we do not possess one tenth of the evidence that carried conviction to Dionysius on the Areopagus and to Apollos at Ephesus. We are still beset with the old Protestant Article, that everything worth a Christian's knowing was put down in black and white once for all in the pages of the New Testament. Peter and John and Paul were not Bible-readers: they did not carry a book about and read extracts: they preached of their own "that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life." How many questions we should have put to them concerning the appearances of the Risen Jesus! The like questions were put to them at Jerusalem and Antioch, at Philippi and Corinth. Their answers were not all written down: "the world itself would not contain the books that should be written" for that purpose. Their hearers took their living word; their disciples and successors repeated it by word of mouth, and so through all generations the glad tidings have travelled as a "word living and effectual": they have not dried up into parchments; they are something over and above the *Codex Sinaiticus*. If,

¹ *Eumenides*, 648.

then, the written narratives of the New Testament are difficult to harmonise, and leave strange gaps or lacunæ, there is nothing to distress the Catholic believer there. He believes in the word of the Gospel: he is thankful to find that word so abundant and satisfactory as it actually is; but still more does he believe in the word of the Church, that his Saviour rose again the third day from the dead.

We do not know much of the King Arthur of history, but we well know the Arthurian legend. When Modernists speak of the Christ of Religion they are, so it appears to me, merely using polite and decorous language: what they really mean is the Christ of Legend. So we have a legendary and an historical Christ; the latter an objective reality, but little known; the former looming large and ample in idea, but in idea only, a creation of the human mind. It is added, indeed, that the idea has been beneficial, has worked well, has been fraught with consequences that commend it to the Pragmatist—but into Pragmatism we had better not enter. The fact of the Resurrection is the key to the whole controversy. Once carry the Resurrection over to the side of Fact and History, and you have no further difficulty in evincing “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” and that the distinction is illusory which the Modernist draws between Fact and Faith, between History and Religion, between Jesus and the Christ.

§ 4. “How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly. The works that I do, these bear witness of me” (John x.). They bear witness, that is, that the living historical Person of Jesus answers to the idea of Christ that was before the Jewish mind. For the Christ of Religion, as an ideal, is prior in time to the Jesus of History. What that ideal was we gather from the angel’s words to His mother: “He shall reign, and of His kingdom there shall be no end”; and to St Joseph: “He shall save His people from their sins.” Say, if you like, that these visions were later inventions: that does not touch the argument; the very

inventions would serve to show what the Jews expected their Christ to be and to do. He was to be King, and He was to save from sin. This rôle the Jesus of History had before Him; this it was the conscious effort of His life to fulfil. He was ever speaking of the Kingdom, and at times let it plainly be understood that in the Kingdom which He preached He Himself was King (*e.g.* Luke xix. 12-27); and He died with the title of His royalty nailed up over His head. As for His saving His people from their sins, we have His frequent saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," His behaviour to Magdalen, His title of "friend of sinners," His announcement that He was to give His "life in redemption for many," and, if we may be allowed one quotation from the Fourth Gospel, His being pointed out by the Baptist as the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." All these features of the Jesus of History are continually being reproduced in the Christ of Religion, that is, Christ in His Church. There is continuity of one with the other. The Church is His Kingdom, like Himself frequently in conflict with the powers of this world, persecuted as He was, commanding allegiance, although for the most part unsupported by physical force—such a Kingdom as was proclaimed from the first to be "not of this world." And in that Kingdom there is exercised that divine power in Him committed to man, the power of forgiving sins (Matt. ix. 1-8). In the Church is realised the Messianic Idea which dominated the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

§ 5. There is a hill in Yorkshire, Penyghent, some 2300 feet high. One morning, from the top of another hill, I saw it for about three-quarters of an hour swollen by effects of light and clouds to Alpine dimensions. As the day wore on, it became itself again, the rocky hump that I well knew, the solid reality of Penyghent, an Alp no more. The distinction of the Christ of Religion from the Jesus of History is meant to indicate a similar superaddition to reality, an idealisation, a religious illusion, a fair vision of what never was. There is

a Litany said in the Catholic Church, called the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, full of rapturous titles and adoring love. To reduce Him to whom this Litany is addressed to His proper human proportions, that is, I suppose, the purpose of Mr Roberts's paper and of many similar writings of the Modernist school.

Well, if this purpose be warrantable and succeed,—as there is no other claimant to the title but Jesus of Nazareth,—the title of Christ lapses: there is no Christ, no Messiah, and there is an end of Christianity and Judaism. To the spirits that cry for this war of extermination I would say, “Take your counsel slowly, for the issues are great.”

JOSEPH RICKABY.

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT—THEIR RELATIONSHIPS IN MODERN THOUGHT.¹

✓ PROFESSOR DR NATHAN SÖDERBLOM,

University of Upsala.

I.

“FATHER, Son, and Spirit”: so runs the formula in which Christianity expresses its belief in God. These three words imply, do they not, three areas, three circles, one within the other, all three perhaps concentric? “The Father” is the belief in God, represented in some form or other among all peoples at all times. It is the expression for the universal. The sphere designated by “the Son” falls, as one of the forms of the belief in God, and as the highest revelation of this, within the area of the first Article. We pass from universal religion to Christianity; from the outer court into the sanctuary. But within the sphere in which Christ is known we see a group of men severing themselves from the rest, men with a specific religious experience of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, the work of the Spirit in their hearts. This is the true Church within Christianity at large, the real believers among the multitude of nominal Christians. They represent personal piety and conversion within an everyday “respectable” belief in God and “respectable” morality. “The Spirit,” the work of the Spirit, thus suggests the step from the Holy to the Holy of Holies.

Who will deny that this attitude is more or less the form

¹ Translation revised by the author.

assumed by the religious ideas of a large class of believers, not only in the past, but also at the present day? It is equally characteristic of pietism as of rationalism. By association with these movements, historically so closely related to one another, it has established itself in the Christian ideas of the present day.

But it is old, old as the foundation of the belief in God on a contemplation of nature, old as natural theology in the most comprehensive meaning of the term. Indeed, it reaches far into the past. It may be suspected that the crudest and baldest notion of God which we can find among the so-called "primitive peoples" in their ancestral beliefs answers rather the theoretical question, "Whence come we?" "Who hath made this?" than the religious question, "Who can help us?" It is evident that we must be extremely cautious in drawing conclusions from now living "savages," who have many hundreds of human generations behind them, to the original form which the belief in God and the spiritual world assumed in the human race. And even if we knew in what form it presented itself, we cannot too strongly insist that conclusions ought *not* to be drawn from the *historical* origin to the actual *essence* of the matter, viz. the belief in God.

When we turn to the culture of historical times, we find that the idea of God as the ultimate cause of motion, and as a conception dominating and giving meaning to our representation of the world, was conclusively defined in its main outlines by Aristotle. But it remained for the Christian thinkers and theologians of the Middle Ages to work out and complete the theory of the interdependence of our conception of the world and our belief in God.

It was not for naught that Luther bore ill-will to Aristotle. For in Luther's eyes God, outside of Christ, was a consuming fire. After passing through great spiritual anguish, he had lost all belief in man's power to reach the true nature of God, or, in Luther's mediæval phraseology, "to obtain a gracious God," without Christ. Luther's idea of God is religious from first

to last. God, in his eyes, is not, in the first place, an explanation of the world, but "that on which the heart implicitly relies," or, as Pehr Eklund has more precisely formulated it, "the One, or that which helps to the highest good from the deepest evil." But, for Luther, as for his contemporaries, the conception of God himself was self-evident. It must be borne in mind that Luther brands unbelief, that is, lack of confidence, as the sin of sins, and prays God to preserve him from "want of faith, despair, and other heinous sins and vices." The remarkable thing is that Luther gives sin a religious, or rather anti-religious, ground. Its essence is want of confidence in God. But expressions like this cannot be properly understood unless we bear in mind that the conception of God was for Luther a matter of self-evidence; God's existence he did not call in question. That a God exists we all know. But do men take up a right attitude towards Him? Do they possess a gracious God? Do they know Him in Christ? To take the sin of "unbelief" of which he speaks to mean doubt of the very *existence* of God, instead of want of *confidence* in Him, is to miss the essential point—Luther's religious views. But in Luther's view the first article of the Christian faith by no means stood solitary. It was indissolubly bound up with the others.

In order to point the contrast with Luther, I shall now single out one thinker as a representative of the belief of natural religion in God. David Hume writes, at the opening of his *Natural History of Religion*, published in 1757, "The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion." That there exists an all-wise, all-good, and all-mighty God is for a thinking man as self-evident as that twice two are four. Belief in him is the "fixed point"—there is, properly speaking, no need of the second and third Articles—and starting from this "fixed point" we can take up an attitude to all possible questions.

It is interesting to note how, what was self-evident in the religious doctrine of the enlightened men of those times—such as God, a rational ordering of the world, and personal immortality—has in modern times become a source of difficulty, while what was rejected as incompatible with God's perfect goodness and wisdom is now accepted with but little demur. How can hereditary sin be reconciled with God's justice? Who can be blind to the fact that the morally living man counts as personal guilt that which is really an outcome of the sins of past generations? Again, every kind of substitution—so people thought in those days—is at variance with God's justice. Those who take the modern point of view must now assent to the truth, however awkwardly formulated in the doctrine of the Church, of a substitution, according to which one being can enter by sympathy into the moral life of another, and win a blessed participation in his moral character and work.

Further, we are confronted by the power of evil in the world and in human life. "The world, the flesh, and the devil"—these are ugly words. Surely such things cannot exist in God's world. A few years ago Anne Garborg brought together some ghastly facts illustrating the reigning conceptions of the devil. God be thanked that, in Sabatier's words, "ink has been more effective than holy-water against him"—and against the grisly terror which the belief in the devil has cast over men's minds. The belief in the devil would have existed anyhow in melancholy or deeply afflicted minds, who will ever retain the essence of that belief: a painful feeling of the crucial enigma of the power of evil in the world. But in those good old times when the devil inspired men with terror that feeling was made into a mountain, which concealed the sun for whole generations from young and old. And yet, can the facile religion of monism or its vaguely outlined conceptions satisfy us in the long-run? Does not reality speak to us with too mighty and terrible a voice?

The confident assurance of an almighty loving will as the

essence of things is, to be sure, a good and blessed belief. It is indeed the kernel of the Christian faith. But in our Christian communities it is based on something quite other than the contemplation of nature and the world. It is utterly alien to our modern ideas to take the belief in an all-good and almighty regent of the world as something self-evident, and to eliminate from reality, or from formulas which are ultimately founded in real experience, everything that conflicts with this belief.

II.

It might seem as if the relations between the Articles of Faith had in our times been reversed. Apparently the three concentric circles will have to change their relative positions.

If there is any form of the conception of God which may now be regarded as universal, and as constituting the very essence of "religion" in the best sense of the word, it will be found in the term "the Spirit," "the work of the Spirit." There is a twofold justification for starting from this centre. In the first place, it is empirical. Experience, not ideas, is fundamental. And further, the nearest experience, not occurrences of a remote past, is made the starting-point. Religion itself, as a reality and a power in the soul and life of the individual and of humanity, no one can deny, whatever he may think and assert as to the existence of God. Secondly, a start is made, not from nature and the order of the world, but from the very region where the idea of God has its main root—living religion itself. The work of the Spirit is immediately evident.

Amongst those who adopt an attitude of passive indifference or active criticism towards the Christian belief in God, but nevertheless avow their belief in religion, three salient types may be distinguished, all of which may be grouped together as believers in the work of the Spirit in the heart or in society—but, of course, not the Spirit in the restricted meaning of

the third Article. The place of honour undoubtedly belongs to those who, by a supreme effort, or by letting themselves fall back upon the very core of their being, have sounded their own moral depths, and found a spiritual reality, a Saviour, and a moral standing-ground. I allude to the psychological fact in moral life, when, after great struggles, a passive giving himself away seems to carry the man down to the very bottom of his nature, where fresh power and a new confidence are won. Such men believe perhaps that they must and ought to describe the essence of this reality, its relation to human life as a whole, still more to nature and the world, as a *non liquet*. But, none the less, it is for the individual soul an experience of fundamental and incalculable value.

If the way of the Spirit conducts that first group into the innermost secret chamber of the heart, for the second it opens up a vast and boundless expanse of outward vision. I do not mean that the spacious expanse which surrounds the second group is made up by merely adding together the "solitary places" in which the individuals of the first live their inner lives — this would be to confuse the distinction between the two groups. It is not as though their eyes after closing in worship and prayer had then opened to the consciousness that here is an abiding dwelling-place of inward life and divine existence for all. Rather is it a cosmical state of mind than any interior state of deepened personality that I am contemplating here. It is life in its wholeness that is worshipped, that inspires consolation. This may be described in general terms as standing under the stars, or, as a definite and peculiar state of mind, be defined more precisely as follows: "it is a feeling of at once being lifted above the ordinary world, and of coming into more intimate touch with everything around us." It is, of course, extremely difficult to describe this condition exactly, for it verges towards the indescribable. It is as if a barrier fell, and we found ourselves in a bright under-world, and at the same time were penetrated with the assurance that it is this very world which is the true

world of reality. It is much the same as what the Americans call "cosmic consciousness." One is ready to add *tat tvam asi!*

Most assuredly, a distinction has to be made. Believers in the value of life for its own sake must necessarily find a mysticism which shuns the world and flies into the arms of the infinite utterly unprofitable and visionary. And the exponents of the latter view of life must find a worship of existence as conceived in the current evolutionary metaphysics, or perhaps in the form of an ether endowed with the power of motion and thought and moral quality, after the manner of Haeckel and Björnson, to be a conception of life which is crude beyond words. In neither case is the view of the world immediately "given," and less so in the former than in the latter case. In the former case the working hypotheses or main tendencies of science are in some way hypostasised. In the latter case inner contemplation carries one beyond the world of sense into the airy regions of pure spirit. But both views have this much in common, that they are based on the inner experience of the individual, an experience to which the term "religious" may be applied. In the one case, it is worship before the shrine of the world in its wholeness; in the other, an attempt is made to shake off the chains which bind one to earth by cultivating the mystical consciousness of the Spirit, of the peace, freedom, and supernatural sense of power which "recollection" and inner contemplation carry with them.

If the two groups which we have just been considering are individualistic, in the third of these groups of non-Christian believers religious feeling assumes a social character. It is based, not on the secret experiences of the individual soul, but on the social consciousness. It has found expression in the positivists' cult of humanity, and in an opposite direction, fronting forwards, in the religious dignity of social democracy and sacrifice for a future commonwealth of justice and happiness. Both are radical in tendency, in spite of their affinities and of their origins, the one in Catholic veneration for society and

tradition, the other in prophetic eschatology. They will have nothing to do with the historically given religion. There is a milder form of religious attitude to the spirit of society, to the genius of history, to the race. The individual wakes up, in his turn, to a consciousness of the spiritual heritage which past generations have accumulated and purified. It may happen that the horizon expands so suddenly that a crisis ensues. Then one of the North American religious psychologists will step in and explain the conversion without any need of metaphysics. In all stages of culture it has been a time-honoured practice that the young are introduced into the traditions of the race. The social spirit which dominates the East has impressed the peoples of the West. Even if the feeling for society and participation in historical development does not create any special rites and ceremonies for itself, as in the Orient, it can fill the place of religion for certain individuals, in the form of an earnest and sincere devotion to the spirit of community.

Thus, whether one merely looks on at existing religion and belief in God as a spectator, or ascribes religion to oneself in one form or another, the workings of the spirit, the higher life which is led in communion with him, and the feeling of unity with which this is attended, are the ultimate starting-point and the universally characteristic feature of belief.

For the modern conception of religion which I am here endeavouring to focus in spite of its vague or intricate contours, Christ the Son designates a smaller area, a circle within, one of the many specific forms of spiritual experience and religious phenomena in the world, or perhaps a concentric circle, which thus lies nearer round the centre.

The belief in Christ, or the belief through Christ, stands out in relief against ordinary religion, as against other historical forms of piety. Here I will only observe that many religious experiences of modern times are of such a nature that they would only, humanly speaking, have taken place within

Christianity. They are specifically Christian in their nature, though the person or persons who have undergone them are perhaps not conscious of their relation to Christ. To be convinced of this requires such a profound knowledge of the history of religion that we must content ourselves here with merely pointing out the fact. But I am prepared at any time to support my statement with a series of proofs.

And what about the Father? It may seem most unreasonable to give to the belief in Christ, the second Article, a wider sphere than to the belief in the Father, the first Article. But this is not foreign to modern lines of thought. It is some ten years ago since a remarkable religious personality, Admiral Réveillère, said to me: "There have been periods in my life when I have been an atheist. But, had I ventured, I should have wished to call myself Christian all the same!" The same is true, no doubt, of many in our times. Christ is for them the rock of religion and the heart of faith. No other name is given. He is the sun in the world of the soul, the guide, the Saviour, the Lord—God, as far as God is that on which the heart wholly relies. But the Father! Is all this bewildering existence essentially the expression of personal love? Is it reason, a will of righteousness, in which all has its origin and its reality? Is it a living moral that rules all things? How preposterous it is that theories should throw dust in men's eyes and make them inhuman. I have never met a more palpable instance of this *naïveté* than the glee good radicals show at the theory that there is no God, which, according to them, ought to be evident to all. If it were really a self-evident matter that there is no God, only simplicity and thoughtlessness could avoid seeing that life would become more dismal and harder to endure.

On the other hand, all those of us who have experienced any of the difficulties of life, both within and without, have at one time or another caught ourselves thinking: How is it possible that I, in spite of the difficulties raised by experience

and reflection, should be able to believe in an almighty and all-good God? Even among those who feel themselves at one in heart with the Christian community, the difficulty may be so great that, for instance, one of the leading reformed preachers in France, Wilfrid Monod, who came from the evangelical, not the liberal, camp, declares himself obliged to abandon his belief in the almightiness of God.

How can a belief in Christ be possible without a belief in the Father, even in such a modified form?

Well, it is brought about by a change of the Gospel. That the life and conduct of Jesus, and his Gethsemane, should present themselves as the highest religious and moral facts, that his work and personality should be regarded as imbued with reparative and propitiatory power, is possible, even though a man may not feel himself face to face with a personal God, but with an inexorable and irrational concatenation of causes, or an impenetrable obscurity. So marvellous is human nature, and so deeply rooted the need of religion, that prayer, and, in the last resort, Jesus' prayer, "Thy will be done," can be exercised by an upright heart without belief in a personal God. It throws a significant light on the state of belief in God among men of the present day that Christ can be embraced by earnestly religious hearts *without*, or *anterior* to, the assurance of a living God coming into being. One may be tempted to doubt the divinity of God, but scarcely the divinity of Christ.

A word is necessary as to Christ's place in modern theology. I do not wish to dwell on the one-sided and unsatisfactory, weak, sentimental, or hysterical, sometimes would-be brilliant descriptions of Jesus which have been produced;¹ nor on the general misconception of the religious function which Jesus assigns to himself. Modern theology has been accused both of the denial of Christ's divinity and of Jesus-worship.

¹ "Nituntur Christi personam ipsi capere et quasi gerere: quidquid vero paribus in adiunctis ipsi fuissent acturi, id omne in Christum transferunt." Enc. Pascendi dominici gregis.

Passing now to the more profound treatment of the Christ problem in modern theology, and taking as its most representative exponent W. Herrmann, both these accusations point in the same direction, namely, Christ's inner life, the spiritual essence of his personality, which, instead of a metaphysical divine nature, becomes in the eyes of this school the divine element in Christ, the perfection of the revelation of God, and the rock of the Christian faith,—a reality in history which at the same time in its essence transcends all history.

Herrmann's belief in God is directed to this inner life of Christ—which he has almost placed in mystical severance from history—in such a way and with such an exclusive insistence on the element of religious revelation in the belief in God that one must ask oneself what becomes of the conception of the eternal divine being, of God as the source and ruler of existence? Where is the Father? Herrmann replies: He that sees Christ sees the Father.

Herrmann's metaphysics seem to me obscure. However, if this is Jesus-worship, a sharp distinction must be made between the religion which is based on the moral-religious personality of Christ, and the sentimental and romantic enthusiasm for Jesus which deservedly bears the name Jesus-worship.

Swedenborg, too, made Christ the Alpha and Omega of belief in God, but in quite another fashion. He moved him up into the place of the metaphysical conception of God. In Herrmann the metaphysical idea of God is thrust back behind Christ's inner life. Swedenborg makes Christ the supernatural Deity himself. The Father is the Love that is to be found in the Son. The Father is thus made an attribute of Christ, namely, his love. Strictly speaking, there can be no question of an "I" and a "thou" between them. In Gethsemane, Jesus makes appeal to his true ego. The success of Swedenborgianism was due to a conjunction of causes. The manifestation of spirits, or spiritualism, is one attraction; the rationalistic and moralistic criticism of the Church doctrine is another. The symbolical

interpretation and the doctrine of correspondences has likewise its attraction for certain temperaments at all times. Swedenborg's eminence as a scientist must also have been a contributing factor. Now I have irrefragable proofs for the assertion that the religious force of Swedenborg's doctrine, in certain cases at any rate, was as follows: Christ is God; to seek any God beside him or beyond him—and I might add "behind him"—is paganism.

It was not, however, these theological tendencies I wished particularly to indicate, but to point out the modern conception of the spirit, the individual experiences and the working of the spirit in society, as the recognised and fixed starting-point in religion, the belief in Christ as a part of it, and the belief in a personal God as—not the first, but, if at all—the last step, the bold assurance which is not granted to all, or as an element which may be dispensed with in religion.

III.

The characteristic thing about the Christian belief in God is that the three are one. Father, Son, and Spirit do not designate different areas, but one and the same belief in God. No man knoweth the Father but the Son. Granted that Jesus meant this as an observation drawn from human relationships, he applies it, at any rate, to his divine relationship. The Spirit is the divine presence in the congregation and in the individual. To obtain assurance of God, it is more profitable to attend a Welsh revival meeting than to read a treatise proving the existence of God. In the Apostolic Creed the Christian idea of God does not receive its due. As a fully valid expression for Christian experience of God and belief in God the Articles leave much to be desired, however venerable they may be as the witness of many Christian generations to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It is natural that that which is the immediate living experience of the congregation should receive the best expression. Therefore it is the third Article which is most genuinely Christian, the universal

communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection, and eternal life.

The second Article contains in the words "suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried," a valuable reminder that Christianity is a historical religion in a true sense. But there is nothing to tell us that this historical element in Christianity does not consist only in certain events in the outward world, but in a holy and perfect personality. It looks as if the divine element in history was *intrinsically* bound up with an abnormal physiological origin of the human body which was its vessel. The belief in the resurrection of Christ is enunciated there as a bare fact, but without its religious connection, as it is, for instance, expressed in the psalm of faith, "for us he overcame death."

If we eliminate the purely historical items and the eschatological reference to the Judgment, the enumeration is such that it might hold good of Osiris or Mitra or any other divinity of nature-worship, a result which the Panbabylonians actually apply to the interpretation of the Gospel.

Just as it is natural that the third Article of the new life in the community, which was a matter of fact immediately given, should be the best formulated, so it follows, of course, that a little of the sentiment of natural religion and antique speculation should find its way into the Articles of Christ and the Father. The first Article, as it stands, *might* hold good of any higher creative divinity whatever—Jupiter, or Marduk, or Ptah—and it invites us to emancipate our belief in God from revelation, and to formulate a so-called natural religion or belief in God, whereas in Christianity reliance on God is insolubly bound up with the attitude to Christ, and with the work of the Spirit in the congregation. What I mean is this, that, from a genuinely Christian point of view, modern conceptions which turn on actual religious experiences and the phenomena of moral and social life are not less but more promising than if the starting-point were a conception of God without true religious character—although I am not blind to

the value of such a unified view of life, compared with the anarchy or the radical dogmatism which now prevails. But this must not prevent us from daring to recognise that we have a truer, deeper, surer, more inward way to the Father when moral self-discipline and the deepening of the personality by prayer has first led a man to inward "recollection," to a hidden communion with the Spirit, and he is then brought to recognise in him the Father of Jesus Christ, than if God is a self-evident matter, his relations to which he needs only to order in a Christian way.

IV.

But what becomes of the objectivity of the belief in God if religious experience, and not the contemplation of the universe, is made its foundation?

Objectivity, in the sense that it is possible to verify from something outside oneself, and prove from something outside oneself, is nothing at all, because man always moves in his own conceptions, and is absolutely limited to his personal preconceptions. In natural science the human mind co-ordinates the perceptions of sense into a system which aspires to, but never attains, necessity in itself. If the conception of the world is made into something objective, something which possesses an objective reality, this takes place only by an act of faith, by an active expression of the personality. And when the human mind attacks nature, when science works nature for her purposes, it is as obvious as possible that the idea which is immediately given, the longer science operates, becomes more and more radically transformed, till it is almost unrecognisable. The conception of nature which science works with in the pursuit of her objects cannot possibly have its object and its truth in itself, but is conceivable only as a means. On the contrary, science breaks up the given world of the senses and the whole conception of matter in a way which shows that, if reality is assigned to the world of the senses, the credentials of its reality must lie with

the subject, or something that is in affinity with the subject, that is, the spirit. Truth, objectivity in natural science, then, is dependent on the severity of the method, the cleverness of the invention, the earnestness and skill which the subject displays in his endeavours—not on anything the subject can discover by creeping out of his own skin.

Similarly with history. Out of a chaos of facts, a number are selected and arranged into a system, whereby the personality of the historian, his culture, and his way of judging life inevitably reveal themselves. Objectivity cannot be gained by any kind of photography of reality, but only in so far as the investigator, as the phrase runs, “sinks his whole being in reality.” This is really tantamount to saying that he expands and deepens himself and his conceptions. Just in proportion as he emancipates himself from accidental and subordinate points of view, and by the development and discipline of his personality becomes imbued with a feeling for what is essential, sets in relief whatever tends in the highest degree to promote the life of the race, and overcomes the temptations to individual and collective selfishness—in this degree will history approach to objectivity. The way thither passes through the subject, not outside it. Nevertheless it is true in this as in other departments of life that the personality gains itself by losing itself—the lower self.

God does not belong to outward experience like nature and history, but to inward. But if the assurance of God's existence is to be objective, it must be brought about in the same way as that just alluded to, by the deepening of the subject with its experience. God must be placed in a relation both to nature and history. In my view this is a necessity not only of knowledge, but also a need of religion. But it is not in this way that the objectivity of the knowledge of God is gained ; nor yet by a numerical increase of witnesses, by a *consensus gentium*, but by the personality being directed to what is essential, and finding what the belief in God means for its life. Objectivity, if it is to be gained at all, cannot be attained by a

transition from the inner to the outer, but by the whole human life running in clearness, strength, and truth, and rising to the consciousness of what the belief in God means for it. An objectification of the belief in God comes to pass within Christianity for all who become conscious of the work of the Spirit, and the dependence of their true, higher life on him. The individual within the pale of the Church is born into a living tradition. He receives the belief in God. To the material of knowledge belongs also that interpretation of experience which is given in the culture in which a man is born. Circumstances of all kinds may shake his belief in God, or even destroy it. Or else it is retained as an inheritance, till peradventure the third Article as personal prayer breaks through to assurance, becomes perfect truth:—I possess—in the congregation, through Christ—the forgiveness of sins and fatherly mercies.

But “the objectivity of the belief in God” can be taken in yet another sense as far as Christianity is concerned. The great “men of God” may be thought of as links in a chain of historical revelation, as congregating to form a kind of sacred history. Their work is at once to give a deeper meaning to human life and to proclaim God. In history they form a continuous chain, but when we place them in the world of personality we must set Christ above them all. Our second Article of Faith cannot contain a series of divine prophets and revealers such as we meet with in the religious creeds of Mani, Muhammed, modern hero-worshippers, and many other forms of religious faith. But this by no means signifies that Christ is to be isolated. Modern theology, in its reaction against natural religion, has placed him on a lofty pedestal in such solitary grandeur that the foundation of belief in God has threatened to be narrow, though made of hard and pure metal. Historically viewed, the line of revelation passes through the biblical religions. Ideally viewed, personalities standing aside from the line of biblical religion, whose experience of God has been more or less analogous to, though perhaps different in

historical and conceptual aspect from, that of the biblical prophets—I am thinking particularly of Socrates—may be counted among those witnesses to the inner life whose accumulated testimony forms what may be called “the might of objectivity.”

Further, it must be insisted that the series of witnesses to the inner life does not come to an end with the New Testament. Nay, rather it may be said to be continually extending. Indeed, each of those who, in more or less conscious but intrinsic dependence on Christ, win through to knowledge of God, to inner freedom, and newness of life, in virtue thereof belong to the history of revelation. If we are to speak of the “objectivity of the belief in God” in any other meaning than that of the truth and realisation of personal conviction, that is, if the individual faith is to turn to something objectively given to strengthen and purify and deepen itself, it must be in the first place to this host of witnesses, and first and foremost to a Christ glorified by faith. This is the blessed objectivity of Christianity. It feels, experiences, and sees in its midst a power which, in itself invisible, is made visible in its revealers and its works, and which transcends the spiritual power of man. But, all in all, what is this but the inner way, on which we find ourselves thrust back once more? To go to those who have most richly possessed the knowledge of God, most clearly reflected His image, and who have focussed in themselves all that is most vital in life, what else is this save seeking a deeper inward life? What else is this but reaching an unconditioned reality, involving an absolute obligation? Only in this way does faith in God become objective, and this is the Christian way.

In its strivings to give a theoretical foundation to faith in God, modern thinking in Kant and after Kant has taken a long stride forward; its main tendency has been to base its faith on higher forms of life than nature—on the moral life, as Kant, or, passing to our own days, on history, as Troeltsch, or to culture in all its branches, as Eucken and Norström. If

we look human culture in the face, so these last two philosophers point out, it will be found in its various phases to point beyond itself to a higher spiritual reality. The estrangement which ensued, as a result of Kant's philosophy, between the world of science, of necessity, and the world of personality, which latter alone can bear testimony to God (as, for instance, Ritschl has insisted), is now done away with by this modern school, not by letting the world of personality into the pale of old-fashioned scientific thought, but by subordinating natural science to the consideration of value and personality. The habits of thought from the upper story are applied in the lower. In this way natural science itself is regarded as a link in the chain of human culture, and thus becomes, like culture as a whole, a fingerpost to a divine reality.

But not even for these two modern philosophers is the conception of culture the true foundation and guarantee of that belief. Nay, they seek it in specifically religious experience, in knowledge of God, in the inner experience of the meaning and graciousness of the fountain of life, and thus, next to their own inner life, in the great personal mystics. That is, the third and the second Articles of Faith are the foundation on which the first reposes. The three are thus insolubly bound together.

NATHAN SÖDERBLOM.

UPSALA, SWEDEN.

FAITH AND FACT.

THE REV. PRINCIPAL A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.

New College, London, N.W.

THE general title of this series of articles, "Jesus or Christ?", while admitting a connection, suggests rather a contrast, and the article by the Rev. R. Roberts in the HIBBERT JOURNAL for January quite frankly states the plea for a denial of the connection in emphasising to the utmost the contrast. This article will discuss, from perhaps a more conservative but not, it is hoped, less candid or courageous standpoint than most of the other writers hold, the general question of the relation between faith and fact, religion and history, in order to confirm the common belief of the Christian Churches that Jesus is the Christ. It will be generally recognised that this is probably the most urgent and important question with which the Christian theologian, in seeking to expound and defend the Christian faith, is to-day called to deal. The joyous and hopeful certainty that has marked many of the noblest and most heroic Christian lives in times past is absent from many Christian lives to-day. The mere *will to believe* cannot restore that certainty, and the reason must meet its own questions, if faith is to be confirmed. How can we make our own the apostolic certainty: "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him"?

I.

Faith is concerned with the ultimate meaning and the final aim of self and the world. The sensible experience and

the natural desires do not satisfy the soul of man. He demands and expects a significance and value in existence beyond what his eyes see and ears hear, above what meets his hunger and thirst. Even in the lower forms of religion there is a reaching forth and grasping of the *beyond*, that which is *above*, the power on which man depends, and that which is *before*, the destiny to which he moves. An idea of God for which reality is claimed, and an ideal for man which is to be realised, are the essential content of faith. If it be objected that the ideal belongs to morality rather than religion, it may be answered that morality finds its confirmation in religion, inasmuch as the reality of the idea of God gives the assurance that the ideal will be realised. "Now faith is the giving substance to (ὑπόστασις) of things hoped for, the proving or test (ἐλεγχος) of things not seen." Faith makes the invisible manifest, and the ideal actual. On the one hand, faith affirms the derivation of the material from the spiritual, and its dependence thereon: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." On the other hand, faith is confident that duty is not deceptive, and virtue vain: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Faith has an implicit cosmology and teleology; it finds a meaning in, and gives an aim to, the world and self.

With this general description of faith we may take the first step in our argument. This faith needs facts. Not only must it have evidence that in the force and law and order in nature there is manifested intelligent and beneficent will, but still more must it be assured that in the apparent confusions and conflicts of human history there is "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." The believer needs the assurance that "all things work together for good to those who love God," and that "his labour is not in vain in the Lord." That assurance must be more than a conjecture and

an aspiration; a reality must be revealed which guarantees that the ideal is realisable; fact must confirm faith. It must be admitted that there is much in fact not to confirm but to challenge faith. Materialism and pessimism are possible interpretations of the universe; and there are moods of the soul and moments of experience when they do not seem altogether irrational and incredible. How shall the idealism and the optimism, without which the soul cannot be strong and glad, be sustained amid the contradictions of the world?

Herrmann seeks to answer this question in his pamphlet, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtlicher Thatsachen* (What need has our faith of historical facts?). On the one hand, in the moral law the eternal is revealed in the temporal, "the eternal law of our will takes possession of us" (p. 24). On the other hand, we are living in time, and belong to history, and thus need to realise eternal law in temporal history. "God is for us the power which joins the temporal with the eternal, which makes it possible for man, who lives in time, to cleave to the eternal law, which turns to him, as the law of his own innermost life and willing" (p. 28). We are saved from defeat and despair, not by the eternal as such, but by "God, who has control over the temporal and the eternal." Accordingly, "in this world there must approach us events which give us courage to believe that the providence of God pervades the province of our temporal life, and does not allow us to perish therein" (p. 29).

An idealism which sees in nature, though it admits spirit as ultimate and final, only physical forces and laws, a uniformity of mechanical necessity, and not of reasonable liberty, which allows variation where necessary for higher ends, lacks the courage of its own convictions, and does not offer faith the assurance it needs that God is in all, through all, and over all, that the forces of nature are His exercised will, and the laws of nature His expressed mind, and both will and mind fulfil the ends of His loving heart. An optimism which sees in history only the effort of human wills, the fulfilment of

human aims, and not the action of God in and through men, perfecting His strength in their weakness, does not go as far as its fundamental assumption warrants, and does not make faith courageous and confident of victory. What faith needs is an idealism and optimism which assumes that nature is at God's sovereign disposal, and history under His supreme control, and is therefore prepared to welcome facts which neither the course of nature nor the progress of history thoroughly explains, but which clearly and fully reveal the eternal in the temporal.

We may with reason doubt whether facts that can be explained as no more than natural effects or historical consequences would convey to the soul the certainty of God in nature and history which in its extremity it needs. Because an event is supernatural, or miraculous—that is, because it cannot be accounted for by our common knowledge of nature and history—it is not for that reason to be rejected, if in it God draws near, makes Himself known, and gives Himself to man. Without committing ourselves to the affirmation that the facts faith needs must be supernatural or miraculous, because the challenge to faith comes from nature and history as ordinarily known to men, although not a little could be said in defence of that position, yet we must maintain that faith in God as real and goodness as realisable is so essential to man that any facts that confirm faith are credible, even although they may not be fully explicable. Given a fact which makes the soul sure of God as no other fact has ever done, which encourages the soul in its struggle against sin for goodness with the certainty that God shares the struggle, and will through it lead to victory, which brings the soul into such intimacy with God as to make it confident that its interests are God's concern, and it is reasonable to believe that fact, even although it has not hitherto even been dreamed of in our philosophy of nature or man. Is it incredible that God's truest utterance and best deed for men should transcend all His other words and works?

II.

Even if it be admitted that faith needs facts, it may be objected that facts can never so express and give evidence of the objects of faith as to convey to it the certainty it needs. This was the dominant conception of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. "Historical truth, which is accidental in its character, can never become the proof of the truths of reason, which are necessary" (Lessing). We may meet the objection in two ways. First of all, we may insist that history is not to be regarded as accidental. In nature and history there is a continuous evolution, and this is the revelation of reason. While we cannot go all the way with Hegel in his absolute idealism, in his assertion that all the real is rational, and that, therefore, even sin is to be shown necessary to moral development,—yet we may hold with the poet that "through the ages an increasing purpose runs," and that there are events of history which are necessarily related to that purpose. It is an Absolute Idea that is being evolved in the universe, to use the language of philosophy, or it is a Kingdom of God that is being realised among men, to use the more adequate speech of religion. The truths of reason in abstraction do not primarily concern us, but the ends of reason which are being concretely realised in the history of man. If there be an all-embracing and all-directing purpose, historical truths are not accidental, but events have meaning and worth as means to this end. The first assumption of this view may be rejected.

In the second place, our view of reason is changed: it is no longer static, but dynamic; reason is not now regarded as a permanent system, but as a progressive development. As the world becomes more intelligible, the mind becomes more intelligent. The categories that the reason employs to express reality are becoming more adequate. Reason formerly represented the universe as a machine once made and kept going; now it describes it as an organism in evolution. The truths of reason are not thus necessary in a region of thought

independent of and transcending the sphere of experience. It is in contact with the objective reason in the universe that the subjective reason in man develops. Facts of history, as disclosing the inner meaning of the world, may and do affect that development. It is not reasonable to cut Jesus down to the measure of a man, if there be facts in His history which make a claim on reason to enlarge its outlook. What is reasonable cannot be settled by *a priori* assumptions; it is experience which gives reason the data it must interpret. Very often an appeal is made to reason when it is only a scientific hypothesis as a philosophical speculation which is assumed as one of its necessary truths. This does not mean scepticism regarding the capacity and competence of reason to test all the data that may be presented in experience; but it is a demand to criticise before applying categories, to make sure that reality is not mutilated to force it into a Procrustes bed of theory. This eighteenth-century objection need not, then, arrest our argument.

But, apart from this, it may be asked: How can an eternal and infinite God, or an absolute ideal, be revealed in the facts of history, involving as these must do temporal and local limitations? To meet this objection we must be very careful how we define the objects of faith. It is not God in His infinitude and eternity who is revealed in the facts of history; it is God as related to man, as realising a purpose in which man is a fellow-worker with God, as offering to man a good which does not exhaust God's fulness of life, but does satisfy the need of the soul. The request which the Fourth Gospel assigns to Philip, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," is what faith claims of fact. The soul wants to be sure of God as kindred and kind, as in gracious fellowship and helpful partnership with man. The answer of Christ in the same passage: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," indicates that it is in a character and consciousness within the range of our historical reality that God can thus adequately be revealed. In the dependence

and confidence, the communion and obedience of the Son under human conditions with human limitations, the revelation of the Father which sufficeth for faith has been given.

It is this filial fellowship and likeness of man to God which is the ideal to be realised in man. It was impossible, but it was also unnecessary, that quantitatively all the perfections of the being of God should be presented in one life as the pattern of the life of man, as the promise of what he shall yet be. It was enough that the perfection of the Heavenly Father as love should be made manifest in the tenderness and helpfulness of the Son as the elder brother of the family of God, so that the principle of a progressive religion and morality should be given—even supreme love to God and equal love to self and neighbour.

We must insist that it is possible in piety and morals to distinguish kernel and husk, to discover permanent and universal principles in temporary and local precepts and practices. Harnack is right against Loisy. Jesus' religious consciousness and moral character were not "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined" by Jewish heredity and environment. A man of religious insight and moral discernment even is not incapable of distinguishing what belongs but to the time and place in his acts, and what is the principle which always and everywhere holds. Had Jesus prescribed a code of morals, a ritual of worship, an order of society, then assuredly He would have bound His religion with the fetters of the temporary and the local; but the Christian Church has truly and rightly held that His truth and grace, without any loss of essential character, can be most variously adapted to the changing needs of the mind and heart of man. God and the soul, man's sin and God's forgiveness, holiness and blessedness, the things about which faith is concerned, may become real in history without loss of permanence and universality.

Without venturing on any speculative metaphysical discussion, two considerations may be offered to sustain the conviction that God can be in Christ to reveal Himself and

raise man to Himself. On the one hand, God as personal, as moral perfection, as truth and grace, is the pattern after which man has been made. Here there is not contrast, but similarity between God and man. God, in this for man His essential being, is expressible and communicable in manhood, and even the conditions and limitations of humanity may make the moral manifestation the more impressive and attractive. That He who was without sin was in all points tempted even as we are, gives deeper significance and higher value to His character as the pattern and the pledge of man's moral growth.

On the other hand, the truth on which so much stress is laid to-day of God's immanence in nature and in man implies the possibility in God of *Kenosis*.¹ God can limit Himself to express and communicate Himself. His personal presence, moral character, gracious action can be adequately and directly expressed and communicated in a personality, not necessarily endowed with omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, attributes which express His relation to the totality of existence as pervading, sustaining, and directing the universe as its Author, Preserver, and Governor. The ends of the Divine Incarnation in Christ determine its conditions and limits. The fact faith welcomes is not absolute deity, but God incarnate.

III.

That faith needs fact, and that fact can so present the objects as to satisfy the needs of faith, are the two steps in our argument that we have so far taken. We have unavoidably indicated what our third step must be. It is in the Jesus of history alone that there is given the fact that faith needs. "In the history of mankind there is one event" which so reveals God as makes faith sure that it is not vain, and "that is the appearance of Jesus Christ as it is handed down to us in the books of the New Testament." "This is 'to believe in Christ,' to experience in the need of life that His appearance alone

¹ Mr Roberts must pardon the word, as it is legitimate for Christian theologians to adopt a New Testament term.

allows us to find the God who allays our inward distress" (Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 30). In recent years the science of comparative religion has challenged every such exclusive claim for Christ, and it is necessary for us to ask ourselves whether any other religious teacher can dispute the claim of Jesus of history to be the Christ of religion, the personal revelation of God and the realisation of the good for man. We found that what faith needs is the reality of God, and the ideal for man as realisable. Every religion that is at all theistic does offer some assurance of the existence of the divine. But the development of mankind in thought and life has left many of the conceptions of the divine behind; Confucianism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam cannot offer a conception of God that can compare with the revelation of God as Father in Christ; and this revelation is not in word only, but in life.

What is often ignored when the revelation of God in Christ is compared with truths uttered by other religious masters of mankind is that Jesus did not simply give the name of Father to God, and leave with men a conception of God inconsistent with the name. In His own attitude to man, which He confidently claimed to be God's attitude, He gave a satisfying content to the name. It was not only love He revealed, but love to the unworthy, or the grace which forgives, which welcomes to fellowship with God the fallen and the outcast. And what is more, He did convince men of the divine forgiveness; He did enable men to trust God as Father. For He Himself was so certain of God, and His love, that the certainty became contagious. He so constantly and completely lived the life of sonship, that attraction to Him resulted in attachment to God. Whether the words fell from His lips or not, He did prove Himself to those who trusted Him the true and living way to the Father.

Consistent with this religious consciousness was the moral character: fellowship with God was proved in likeness to God. It is not necessary to quote the witness which has been borne to the moral perfection of Jesus even by those who have not

admitted the claims which the Christian Church has put forward for her Lord. For with a few exceptions men have rejoiced to see in Jesus the beauty, glory, and harmony of the realised ideal of humanity. It is true that this tribute of admiration, affection, and adoration has not remained unchallenged. A few men have believed that a searching scrutiny of the Gospel records does bring to light flaws and faults; but Christian faith hitherto has maintained that the accusation could be candidly and courageously met. The writer may freely confess that after an honest, serious inquiry he is himself so convinced of the moral perfection of Jesus, and that fact means so much for his faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, that he has no inclination to restate the argument; and it does not seem to him that any urgent necessity to do this now exists.¹

The moral character and the moral teaching of Jesus need not fear comparison with any other religious leader of mankind. Without pronouncing Mohamed an impostor—a verdict that only prejudice would express—we must admit a want of absolute sincerity on his part which places him in striking contrast to Jesus. Gautama, with his secret of salvation in the renunciation of the desire of life, does not, either in theory or in practice, solve the problem of life for a progressive civilised society as Jesus does with His offer of divine sonship and His call to the imitation of the Father in impartial beneficence to others. In Confucius there is poverty of moral thought and life in comparison with the wealth that Jesus offers in word and deed. As one who has carefully and sympathetically studied the records of other religions, the writer still feels himself warranted in affirming the moral supremacy of Jesus.

If the religious consciousness and the moral character of Jesus warrant us in regarding Him as the *Christ* even in the

¹ He is glad that he need not interrupt the course of his argument with any detailed reply to Mr Roberts' criticism of the teaching of Jesus, as other writers have undertaken to discharge this task.

sense somewhat arbitrarily imposed on the word in spite of its definite historical associations, that in His person fact meets the demands of faith, the conclusion is further confirmed by the Christian experience of His mediation. Not only is His certainty regarding God's Fatherhood contagious, and His moral perfection reproductive so that those who come into contact and communion with Him come to trust God as Father and strive to live as God's children in likeness to Him, but Christ Himself becomes to them a living, gracious, mighty presence, whose love not only constrains them, but whose power also strengthens them, so that in Him they have a victory which overcometh the world, and are made more than conquerors over their trials and temptations. Of course it is open to any man who has not this experience to challenge its reality, and to pronounce it an illusion; and there is no sensible evidence or logical demonstration faith can offer to overcome his unbelief; but his denial does not shake faith's certainty. If this were a solitary experience, the denial might seem reasonable; but as age after age the experience has been transmitted, and as from land to land it is being even to-day diffused, he who with so great a cloud of witnesses confirming his own inner testimony possesses this divine gift, will thank God for it, and pray that all, even those who deny its existence, may come to share it.

One consideration more in this connection must be mentioned, although it belongs to the *arcana* of the Christian life. The reality of the mediation of the light, life, and love of God in Jesus Christ is most certain to the man who, broken and contrite in heart, has sorrowed deeply for his sin, and has been fully comforted by the assurance of God's forgiveness which has come to him in the Cross of Jesus. There may be no agreement in regard to the theory of the Atonement among those who alike share this experience, that the one fact from God which is so set over against their sin as to make it "null and nought" is the Cross; but they are one in finding in it alone the power and wisdom of God unto salvation.

IV.

That faith needs fact, that fact may express the objects and so meet the needs of faith ; and that the fact which has met the needs of faith is Jesus the Christ—this has been our argument. The last statement may be challenged, however, in this way. Granted that, if Jesus possessed the moral character and the religious consciousness and consequently could discharge the mediatorial function assigned to Him, He was entitled to be confessed as the Christ, yet literary and historical criticism warrants the denial that the fact was as faith represents it to have been. It is obvious that a detailed critical discussion would be out of place in this essay ; but the writer may state the reasons why he does not accept any such extreme conclusion. In the first place, there is the Christian experience as a present reality as certain to himself as any fact can be ; and this must have an adequate cause. The representation of Christ in the New Testament alone makes intelligible this Christian experience. The Jesus of history which some criticism leaves us with is far too puny a cause for so mighty an effect. Not only so, but if Jesus did not perfectly reveal the reality of God and perfectly realise the ideal of man, and above all did not effectively redeem man from sin to God, then the Christian experience is deceptive, for its present content assumes such a past cause. If the faith of the first Christian generation imagined its object, invested a wise and good Jewish teacher with a grace and glory which in nowise belonged to him, then the faith of the Christian of to-day is but the perpetuation of a lie ; but where and when did a lie not only so simulate the truth, but produce such effects in the life of man ? The writer cannot regard as anything but self-deception the distinction made by the Modernists between historical truth and faith-truth in regard to Christ, and the further attempt to regard as ontologically truth what is not historically truth. There seems to him to be no alternative here between fact and fiction. If Christ as

He is for faith is real in the ontological realm, He was correspondingly real in the historical realm in His earthly life. For what He was in history must already have been the promise and the potency of what He is now for faith. Christian faith in its present certainty of the reality of divine truth and grace in Christ offers an antecedent probability that the Jesus of history was what the generations of believers have from the beginning held Him to be.

Secondly, it must be admitted that if there were a certain historical proof that the Jesus of history did not correspond in truth and grace to the Christ of faith, then, although it is scarce conceivable that man's highest life should have been subject to such a deception and such a disappointment, it would be our absolute duty to admit that our Christian faith had been vain, that so far as any salvation in Him is concerned we are still in our sins, and are of all men most miserable. But the principles and the methods of a great deal of literary and historical criticism appear to the writer to be of very doubtful character. He cannot admit as a reasonable assumption that an ancient historical writer is to be suspected of inaccuracy or deception unless his modern critic cannot escape the impression that what he is recording is fact. A canon of criticism, such as that adopted by Schmiedel, that to begin with one can accept as authentic only such sayings of Jesus as appear to contradict the distinctively Christian conception of Him, and so cannot, therefore, have been invented by Christian writers who hold that view of His person, seems to him simply an extravagance. It begs the question, as it assumes the untruth of this Christian conception. There is a moral quality in the New Testament, a reality about Christ Himself, that evoked a corresponding sincerity in those who believed in Him, which makes incredible the assumption that these writers either were not able or were not concerned to distinguish fact and fiction. The reasonable attitude is to regard them as trustworthy unless there is undoubted proof to the contrary.

A second assumption of this historico-critical method is that only that is historical which the modern scholar can fit or force into his conception of the necessary sequence of events, the course of what seems to him the natural development. Jesus must not be allowed to be original beyond certain definite limits. The modern critic knows just what a Jew of his time and age must have thought and said. But evolution does not appear necessarily continuous, as the origin of life and the emergence of consciousness have not been explained by any known antecedents. A criticism of this dominant category of thought to-day justifies the conclusion that it need not exclude a unique personality in which, as in previous stages, a divine initiative may be recognised.

Even as it seems a gratuitous assumption that Jesus could not have transcended His heredity and environment to such a degree as the Gospels represent, so also without warrant is the tendency to insist that there must have been a correspondence in the Christian religion with features found in other religions. If Christianity is destined, as it now promises, to be the religion in which mankind shall reach its moral and religious unity, it is only what might be expected, if its beginnings were unlike other religions just in these features in which its superiority is being historically demonstrated. The religion that finally and completely meets man's need is likely from the first to have differed essentially from the religions which it is likely, as superior, to supersede. To the writer, the attempt to treat history by the methods of physical science, to find natural law in the spiritual world, is not reasonable; and the mutilation of the object of Christian faith which results from it is not a sacrifice offered to reason, but to an unproved assumption.

It may further be pointed out that there is a literary and historical criticism which does not result in such extreme conclusions as forbid the recognition in the Jesus of history of the Christ of religion. While holding that even Harnack's criticism is somewhat biased by an intellectual intolerance of

the supernatural, the writer would simply refer to the controversy between Loisy and Harnack as an evidence that here we are still in the region of individual conjecture rather than of universal certainty, of opinion rather than of science.

Thirdly, in thus insisting on the inadequacy of this criticism the writer does not desire to sacrifice reason to faith. For him the Christian faith itself offers a standpoint from which things can be thought together. For the man who is in Christ Jesus there is a new mental, moral, and spiritual creation, in which the confusions of the life without Christ have passed into harmonies, and the conflicts into triumphs. To conceive God as dwelling fully and acting freely in nature and history with a constancy such as leads men interpreting His action to think of an order that cannot be changed, and yet also with an originality which, at times, and supremely in the person of Jesus Christ, so transcends that order as to appear to men a departure from it, although there is throughout the unity of a progressive purpose, does not appear unreasonable. To know from personal experience that that progressive purpose so uniquely consummated in Christ is not only revealing, making God known to men, but also redemptive, bringing man from sin to God, is to possess a certainty not in conflict with reason, but offering to reason a new datum for interpretation. There is implicit in the Christian experience a philosophy, not less reasonable, and yet more satisfying to man's moral conscience and religious consciousness, than either naturalism or speculative idealism; and that philosophy, the writer makes bold to maintain, casts a more gracious light over nature and history than any other. Faith is not unreasonable, but gives reason wings for wider and higher flights.

A. E. GARVIE.

JESUS OR CHRIST?

THE REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A.

IN the discussions which have centred around the issues raised in Mr Roberts's article on this subject there has been, so far as one can observe, no attempt to state clearly how much the modern mind can assimilate of the Christ idea as known to Jesus and His contemporaries. It is by no means certain that we could assimilate very much of it. The assumption of the majority of Christians appears to be that the terms "Christ" and "Jesus" are practically interchangeable, the former being a designation of the function, of the latter as God's representative to mankind. On the other hand, there is an increasing number who regard the Christ as an ideal figure, a kind of super-man, traditionally associated with the name of Jesus, but in reality the cumulative product of our own pious imagination. Each succeeding generation makes its own Christ in accordance with its particular ethical standard or social ideal, but the Christ thus projected may have no true relation to the Jesus of nineteen hundred years ago, and is, in any case, not a fixed and immutable quantity, but a mere name for the religious and ethical conceptions which are being wrought out or in process of being accepted at any given period. Before, therefore, we can profitably discuss the alternative "Jesus or Christ?" we ought to try to settle with ourselves the question how much, if any, of the Christ idea, as understood at the beginnings of Christianity, we are now prepared to accept. We have then to inquire how much we know about the real Jesus, or may reasonably infer concerning Him, and therefore how far

He is to be identified, if at all, with the Christ idea, in whatever degree that idea may still be held to possess practical value.

The term "the Christ" may be employed for that ideal of divine manhood which answers to the deepest needs and highest aspirations of our own age; and, so understood, there is no wealth of ethical content which it will not receive. And we do well to recognise its indissoluble connection with the history of Christian thought and devotion; it is a Christian conception, not a mere sentimental abstraction, but the ripe fruit of a continuous experience extending from the apostolic age to the present. Whatever the Christ may connote to the modern mind, we do the term no violence by associating it with Christian origins, for it is through these that it has been mediated to us; the question rather is, Can we retain it in any living and effective way? For when we come to inquire what it may have connoted in its earliest use, we find ourselves in an atmosphere strange and unfamiliar to our modern ways of thinking, and we are beset by the difficulty of obtaining sufficient evidence to warrant us in arriving at clear and definite conclusions. It is unnecessary to say here that the Christ idea had swayed Jewish thought, and even passed beyond Jewish borders, before the public appearance of Jesus. Whatever modifications it may have received through His teaching and influence, it is incontestable that He had to accept a religious situation in which it was already a potent factor. If the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ," is historical, there is implied in it the adoption by our Lord of a designation with an already intelligible meaning; and if He allowed the ascription, it could not have been in a sense wholly foreign to the mind of the disciple. To inquire what the common interpretation of the term involved is to ask for enlightenment not merely on the specific idea, but also on the whole mental atmosphere of the time, and the religious and political aspirations of the Jewish people. And when the term is taken up by later writers, as in the Pauline Epistles and the Fourth Gospel, finding that it carries with

it ideas apparently new, we are constrained to ask for the source of these ideas. It is impossible to believe that they are wholly Jewish. Whence, then, are they derived, and in what way; and with the aid of what adjustments were they made to fit in with the Jewish terminology? That the idea of the Christ, as presented in these writings, had undergone some development between the death of Jesus and, say, the beginning of the sub-apostolic age is evident. The task of elucidating this, as well as of tracing to their source the numerous tributary streams which resulted in the Christology of the fourth century, has been attempted by experts with commendable zeal and thoroughness, though, so far, with only partial success, because, as I have already said, of the fragmentary nature of the evidence. This is a field in which we may expect great results in the near future, but not enough is forthcoming just now to warrant us in saying confidently that we know what the contemporaries of Jesus, of His own race, thought and felt on the subject of the Christ, or what part extraneous influence played in shaping the development of the idea when it became associated with His name. The truth is, there appear to have been many and even conflicting beliefs held concerning the Christ of Jewish expectation at the time when Jesus began His specific work. Few of these can ever have found their way into literature except in a very partial fashion. What the common people thought or assumed is important, and the common people did not write books. It was among the common people that Jesus made most of His converts, or so we are led to infer. The Jewish canon had long been practically complete; and it would be misleading to deduce therefrom what the popular mind had come to hold on religion in general, and the Christ in particular. It is therefore with caution that one here ventures to state briefly the main sources of primitive Christian belief concerning the Christ whom the church identified with Jesus.

The first, of course, was Jewish Messianism. It was at one time accounted sufficient for Christian preachers and

theologians to seek the interpretation of this in the anticipations of the Old Testament. Anticipations there are, but not of a kind which give us the required clue. The Messianism of Jesus' time grew out of these, but did not mean the same thing. Amongst the people with whom He had principally to deal there was a vivid expectation of the coming of a heaven-sent champion who should break the Roman yoke and restore the kingdom to Israel. It is true that this was linked on to Old Testament prophecy, but there is reason to think that the apocalyptic passages of the Old Testament fell short of what was now the cherished hope of the Jewish people, or such part of them as believed in the deliverance at all. The ideal of patriotic Hebraism had been an ideal king. After the historic kingship had passed away, we find in such religious and patriotic songs as the second Psalm the expression of a pathetic belief in the restoration of political independence under such a prince. But the Messianism of the period in which Christianity arose embodied quite new conceptions, due in part to the uprising of the Pharisaic movement. Probably, while the original conception of an ideal king was not forgotten, it became modified according to the special sympathies of individuals. The Messiah was indeed to realise the anticipations of Hebrew prophecy, but He was also to satisfy the aspirations of the existing age. We find traces in the apocalyptic literature of later Judaism of a doctrine altogether new—that the Messiah was to be no earth-born son of David, but a heavenly spirit coming down to take possession of the human body of a Jewish prince. It is doubtful how far the popular mind entertained a doctrine so mystic, but the fact remains that the age could find a place for it, and it becomes intelligible how the anticipation of a Davidic king, which, as the gospels show, was never lost, took in new elements of a more speculative and perhaps spiritual kind. It indicates also one source from which Paul may have acquired the suggestion out of which grew his own distinctive doctrine of Christ as the Man from heaven.

But primitive Christianity could not fail to be affected by influences and tendencies of thought in which Hebrew conceptions were blended with ideas having their origin elsewhere. The doctrine of the Logos may owe more or less to Philo, but, whether or no, the age and clime that produced Philo could and did evolve ruling conceptions analogous to his. Probably Palestine was Hellenised to a far greater extent than we commonly allow for. It is, for example, a very significant thing that the aristocratic priestly party were willing at one time to argue that Yahweh and Zeus were the same being, and therefore that the image of the latter might reasonably (for a consideration) be installed in the temple of the former. It was not only at Alexandria that Greek thought intertwined with Hebrew religion; such cities as Tyre were centres of philosophy, and practically every commercial capital had its school in which philosophic and religious subjects were discussed. Ephesus, as one of these, has perhaps left its mark on history as the real home of the Johannine school, akin to Alexandria, but with its own distinctive features. Tarsus was another such meeting-place of Jewish seriousness with the Greek spirit of inquiry; and here it is more than likely Paul in his early years drank in influences not only from the religion and literature of his own people, but from the Greek wisdom. He may have been touched both by Platonism and Stoicism, and his mind therefore prepared for that cosmic conception of the nature of Christ which finds in the Christological controversies of the early centuries its speculative development. It is not to be ignored that in the case of such a man as Paul personal experience and the needs of his own religious life had a dominant shaping influence upon his thought, but the moulds of that thought were already supplied to him. It is improbable that he had ever seen Jesus in the flesh. The Man of Nazareth was to him an historic figure upon which to impose the trappings and insignia of the Christ idea he had built up out of the Jewish and Hellenic elements which had entered into his special intellectual and religious training. In saying

this, I am not taking for granted that everything that stands in the name of Paul was written by Paul ; but I think one may fairly conclude that there is a forceful personality behind the Pauline Christology which we may continue to identify with Saul of Tarsus.

To these more purely political and speculative elements we may add a third, namely, the Suffering Servant of God. This, at least, as applied to Messiahship, is distinctively Christian, and I hold that there is good ground for believing that it represents the special contribution made by Jesus Himself to the Christ idea ; at any rate, from the very fact of His crucifixion, it was essential from the first to Christian preaching of the Master's Messiahship ; it had to be so—it could not be otherwise. The conception, borrowed as it was from the second Isaiah, had already had an honourable history before it was associated with Jesus, but, so far as we can gather, it had not become thought of as bound up with the Christ idea ; probably it would have been thought utterly incompatible therewith. If to Jesus belongs the credit of having wedded the idea of Messiahship to that of the Suffering Servant, there is nothing which stamps Him greater ; it amounts to a revelation in Jewish religious thought ; those who embraced it were compelled henceforth to regard the Sent One as the burden-bearer of the race, misunderstood, despised, and rejected, but certain in the end to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. “Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory ?”

Lastly, we have, as a factor in the Christ idea, a specifically Persian contribution—Mithraism. No one who gives any attention to the subject can fail to be struck with the close resemblance between the relations of the Father and the Son, as defined later in the creeds of Christendom and the generation of Ormuzd, the Light-god, from Mithra, the Creator from whom have proceeded both good and evil. The Satan of Christian belief is Ahriman ; not the Old Testament accuser of mankind, but the principle of darkness. There can be no need to draw

attention to the New Testament language in which this development is indicated. The Christ is Ormuzd, the Light of the world; and the opponent He has to overthrow is the prince of the power of darkness, or of this world.

It is unquestionable that all these factors were at work in the shaping of the Christ idea immediately before and after the public ministry of Jesus. Palestine must have been honeycombed with them, as to a larger extent were all the centres of Jewish influence scattered over Asia Minor, Northern Africa, Greece, and probably even at Rome, that meeting-place of all faiths and fads. The intensely narrow patriotic party of Judæa had not escaped the influence of foreign ideas in their religious life, strongly as they claimed to have done so; the language of the Pharisees themselves is proof of this; and the higher they thrust the claims of their national Messiah, the more they were compelled to borrow the language of Greek speculation and Oriental mysticism to do Him honour. Some of the popular notions on the subject appear to have been fantastic in the extreme; apocalypses abounded, and in every one the Messiah played the leading part. Now He was a prince of the house of David, a greater Judas Maccabæus, supernaturally endowed for the work of delivering His native land from all her ills; again, a heavenly being sent down for the same purpose; anon He became an emanation of the Deity, or, more properly, the original creation, the only-begotten, through whom the worlds were made. It has to be borne in mind that, according to the dominant thought of the time, Greek and Persian alike, some such being was needed as a mediator between the Deity and His creation. In addition to these variations or modifications of the Christ idea we have the suggestion of a Saviour from sin and its consequences, and the belief in a primordial divine manhood from which we have all come forth and to which we belong. This is about as far as we are warranted in going at present, and it will be admitted by most that the subject is one of extraordinary complexity. It is indeed no simple thing to determine which or how many

of these various views had the greatest influence with the people of Galilee and Jerusalem at the commencement of the Christian era.

But how far have they value now? That is a question which need not take long to answer. We may rule out Jewish Messianism at once, except in so far as it was the anticipation of a universal reign of righteousness—and it is more than problematical whether it was ever that, except to a very small minority. The modern world is not looking for an ideal king, a vicegerent of God, though it is still talking of a coming brotherhood of the nations; we do not expect that a supernaturally endowed individual will be raised up or sent down for the accomplishment of this end. The necessity for the Logos doctrine has also passed away; modern thinking does not need it, and would be repelled by the many fantastic developments it received. As to the heavenly Man, perhaps we may speak differently; there must indeed be a side or aspect of the divine being which already is the ideal humanity slowly becoming manifest in the human race, and the guide and sustenance of its life. On the field of time, the highest achievements of that humanity are made through royal souls, every one of whom may fitly be described as the Suffering Servant of God; the moral advance of the race is not cheaply purchased, at every new stage it involves the crucifixion of the pioneer. Reduced to its simplest terms, therefore, we may say that the only part of the original Christ idea which has power with the modern mind is the thought of an ideal Man, the soul of the universal order, germinally present in every individual, and becoming increasingly manifest as time goes on in the perfecting of human relations. The Christ is a cosmic name in so far as it stands for that in God which is becoming manifest in creation. (It may reasonably be contended that to interpret it thus is a wrenching of the term from its original etymological significance; and so it is; but, as has already been indicated, that departure was made ages ago.) It is a religious name, in that it provides as an ideal for worship

a humanity that is divine, and is the source and goal of our own. It is an ethical name, in that it stands for a righteousness which consists in self-giving for the fullest happiness of all. It is a political and social name, in that it is the watchword of an ideal in which love shall be the law that regulates the common life, and every soul consciously complete itself in every other.

It may be objected that this makes the Christ an abstraction, a quasi-personification of values, without retaining any of the grip and glow that have characterised the history of the name through its identification with an actual living personality. In reply, it may be stated that whether this be so or not, no other interpretation of the word is reasonably possible for the time in which we live. And, after all, as we have seen, the ideal as an abstraction, though associated with an imaginary figure, was in existence long before Christianity; even its Christian history has been little else, for, from Paul downward, it cannot be claimed that the millions who have identified the Christ with Jesus have known anything at first hand about the latter. The richest achievements of the Christ idea have never been due to the fact that it could be confined within the limits of one earthly personality, and one only. Nor is it so to-day; those over whom the idea has the greatest power are enamoured of what it stands for; in associating it with Jesus, they make Jesus stand for these things, but apart from these things they would render no devotion to Him or anyone else. I quite agree that, to be effective, any ideal whatsoever needs to be embodied in a personality, even though that personality be idealised for the purpose; but the ideal would still exist whether there be a personality in which to incarnate it or no. I submit that the Christ idea is as potent to-day as it ever was, because we need a word wherewith to gather up and express what the religious mind feels in reference to a divine humanity who "is before all things, and in whom all things consist."

Now how far does Jesus answer to this ideal? "Not at all,"

some would say ; “ we know nothing positively of Him ; and if we did, we could not rightly say that any one personality, living a true human life as Jesus did, could fully embody and express all that we mean by the Christ ; to do so would be to sacrifice individuality.” But this is just as true of the Christ of apostolic thought as of the Christ of modern aspiration. Jesus never did secure political deliverance for Israel ; He did not return on the clouds of heaven to summon all the nations to a grand assize, in accordance with primitive Christian expectation ; He is not the only suffering servant of God whose life has been given for his message ; and it is probable that no one would have been more surprised than Himself at being told that He was the soul of the cosmos, and the source and goal of every human being. So far as we can judge from gospel evidence, the Christ of the Apostle Paul bore little or no relation to the actual Jesus of Galilee. He is an official, a potentate, a majestic *summum bonum*, but not a living teacher in homespun, who went about telling his countrymen wondrous things concerning God and the kingdom of heaven. For Paul, the earthly ministry of Jesus does not exist ; he begins where other apostolic testimony leaves off ; all he has to say about Christ could just as well have been said under any other name than that of Jesus. But is there, then, no vital connection between the two ? Has the Christ idea nothing to do with Jesus, no dependence upon His name and work ? Do we know nothing of what the Jesus of nineteen hundred years ago actually was, said, and did ? I maintain that we do, and that the fact is important as lending dynamic to the Christ idea, and making it a gospel for the modern world. In the first place, we may lay it down as an axiom that no great spiritual movement has ever yet taken place without a central personality to give it expression. Where were Methodism without Wesley, or the Franciscan movement without Francis ? Personality is the greatest force in the world as well as the greatest mystery. The personality who becomes the focus and inspiration of a movement may originate nothing ; he may only concentrate

what already is, or utter what is already in the air, but he is necessary before there can be such a thing as a movement at all; ideas are helpless until personality lends them wings. This must have been what happened in Palestine when the young carpenter undertook His mission in the hour pregnant with great possibilities that we now call the beginning of the Christian era. I say *must*, for all the analogies of history go to confirm the hypothesis. Secondly, we may reasonably affirm it to be a cosmic law that no movement can ethically transcend the personality from which it arises. This is a statement insusceptible of demonstration, but surely it is one warranted by experience as well as by our belief in the reasonableness of the universal order. We may judge the quality of a man from the tone of the movement which calls itself by his name; that movement may be modified in a thousand ways, but there will always be a dominant note as long as it retains vitality, and that dominant note will necessarily be a projection of the character of its founder. This is disputable, but hardly deniable. The dominant note of Christianity has ever been that of the commingling of the seeming incompatibles of austerity in self-judgment with mercy and compassion for others. The ethic of Christianity is losing the life to find it, that is, living the individual life in terms of the whole, or making the most of oneself for the good of all. The immortal paradox in which this ideal is enshrined may or may not be the actual words of Jesus, but as it is the soul of Christianity we may reasonably infer that it was the perception of this in Him which filled His followers with reverence for His character, and probably some measure of awe. A life lived for high impersonal ends must always command such reverence, even though it be faulty or ill-developed; and I conceive it impossible that Jesus could have been unworthy of the devotion He received. Fanatics might have gathered round Him if He had made them the extravagant promises we know other would-be messiahs did make, and perished for

making; but the first Christians brought forth fruits of religious enthusiasm too exalted to be described as fanaticism. As I once heard Principal Fairbairn say in a sermon, men are not saved by myths or renewed by fancies; here was a spiritual effect; what must the cause have been? This is a line of argument quite as legitimate, and at least as valuable, as documentary evidence. One need not care much whether the synoptical gospels were written in the first century or the second, nor whether they are the composite products of a series of oral traditions, edited in accordance with the several biases of their compilers; but of one thing we can be reasonably sure, and that is, that no such syncretism of ideas could ever take place around an imaginary or inferior character. Further, it is of small importance to show that the Jesus of the gospels was inconsistent with Himself, or limited by the prejudices of His time. The Rev. Charles Voysey is welcome to all he can prove concerning the defects of the Master in this or that particular. Ignorant Jesus may have been, must have been, concerning much that is now commonplace knowledge—though it is probable that He was not an uneducated man; the Galilean peasant idea has been overdone—for no really ignorant man could ever have attracted and compelled the respect of such men as those who founded the Apostolic Church, and gave to the world a faith so august, backed up by a self-devotion so complete. Grant to the full that the Sermon on the Mount is no all-comprehending rule of life; grant that there are wide tracts of human experience that it leaves untouched; grant that some of its precepts are impracticable in such a society as ours, and perhaps undesirable too; grant the eschatological difficulties of other portions of the teaching attributed to Jesus: it still remains true that the being who could inspire others with a faith in God which issued in such a consistent effort to live for the benefit of mankind must have been extraordinary. To speak of Him as morally perfect is absurd; to call Him sinless is worse, for it introduces an entirely false emphasis into the relations of God and man. I do not believe Jesus would

have been in the least interested in such categories, and would have repudiated them as applied to Himself. Moral perfection for the individual as an end in itself is to be deprecated; what moral perfection may be in its fulness no one knows or will know till the race has reached its goal, but, whatever it be, no individual can reach it alone. To speak of being freed from sin, or of being sinless, as the great end of spiritual endeavour, is about as inadequate as to speak of cutting the knots out of a sapling as the end of arboriculture. Humanity is one and indivisible, and the aim of every individual being should be to live as though he or she had no value or significance apart from the One who is All. If Jesus has done anything for humanity, He has done this: He has made us believe in it, and it is this which constitutes His Christhood. Here is no speculation, but hard fact; this has been the distinctive message of Christianity to the world; and what else can we say but that its founder must Himself have tried to realise it in His own career? We need claim no other uniqueness for Him than that of being, in this respect, "the first-born among many brethren."

It may seem startling to some people to be told that the Christhood of Jesus does not consist in His moral perfection, nor in His place in the Godhead, nor—as I need hardly say—in His supposed atonement to divine justice, but in the success with which He has impressed upon mankind the ideal of a humanity which is the fullest possible expression of the love of God. But does it not fit the facts? His Christhood would be of little avail if it did not awaken ours; Christhood is manhood at its highest power. On the plane of time and sense it can never be fully manifest, but here it involves a self-giving in pain which, we may trust, in higher spheres is swallowed up in joy. There is no need of the alternative "Jesus or Christ?" For the greatness of Jesus consists in the fact that He has made the word "Christ" a synonym for the best and highest that can truly be called human.

R. J. CAMPBELL.

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS TEACHING.

THE REV. JAMES DRUMMOND, D.D., LL.D.

WHEN attempts are made to reverse the judgment of history in regard to Tiberius or Catiline or other shady characters, and to represent them as the victims of party spirit and misunderstanding, one may be surprised at the eccentricity of such a view, but every benevolent man would rejoice to find that the world's villains were not really so black as they had been painted. But our feelings would naturally be different if the process were reversed, and those who had drawn to themselves the admiration of ages for their intellectual or moral qualities were represented as quite unworthy of the homage that had been bestowed upon them. If anyone tried to prove to his own satisfaction that Socrates was a rake and Plato a fool, we should be apt to feel contempt for such an opinion, and before we even considered it we should ask for substantial proof of serious weight and competence on the part of the critic. It would not be unreasonable to exercise a similar restraint of judgment when the person selected for criticism has dwelt as a religious power in the heart of Christendom for nearly two thousand years; and when his teaching is represented as ignorant, foolish, and mischievous, we have a right to demand very careful investigation, and a tender respect towards the religious veneration which has come down as an inheritance from the past. It is true that that veneration may cause one to overlook unquestionable facts, and to frame untenable theories; and allegiance to truth requires us to look facts in the face, and to alter our theories if a new

perception of facts demands such alteration. But allegiance to truth equally requires us to guard against superficial impressions, and against the very common error of supposing that all candour and wisdom are on the side of those who scornfully repudiate what has been generally believed. It is not a pleasant task to have to defend against aspersion those whom we love and honour; and it is solely in deference to the Editor's request that I venture to offer a few remarks on a subject which he has thought worthy of debate.

Irenæus devotes all his skill to proving, against the Gnostic speculations of his time, *neque alius quidem Christus, alius vero Iesus*. It is curious to find the old Gnostic idea revived in modern times, and with this curious disadvantage, that not only is Jesus reduced to the level of a very indifferent, and indeed a very mischievous teacher, but the Christ, who was a real being to the Gnostics, is frittered away into an abstract ideal, which, I suppose, never melted a sinful heart or satisfied a longing love. The separation was made by the Gnostics because the human and the Divine natures seemed to them so infinitely different that their union in a single person was unthinkable; but in modern times it is suggested because the Divine element in Jesus has been so described by theologians as to be inconsistent with the recorded facts. While I believe that the spiritual instinct of the Church, which looked forward to the complete incorporation of humanity in God, was perfectly right in opposition to Gnosticism, I am unable to accept the formula through which this instinctive perception was expressed, and I fully admit the inconsistency of much "orthodox" opinion with the human story in the Gospels. My own consistency I am not concerned to defend against the misunderstanding of Mr Roberts, especially as this has been admirably done for me in the pages of *The Inquirer*. I will only say that

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,"

and that I see in the beauty of a rose a Divine thought, which is no other than God himself coming into manifestation

through the rose, so far as the limitations of a rose will permit ; but I do not believe that the rose is God, possessed of omniscience, omnipotence, and so forth. But if a man does not perceive this beauty, and recognise it as a Divine expression, it is impossible to prove it to him ; and no doubt the deep impression which it makes upon others will appear to him extremely absurd. So there are those who have, through the medium of the New Testament and the traditional life of the purest Christendom, looked into the face of Jesus, and seen there an ideal, a glory which they have felt to be the glory of God, a thought of Divine Sonship, which has changed their whole conception of human nature, and the whole aim of their life ; and no criticisms and no shortcomings can alter that supreme fact of spiritual experience. But if a man has no such experience, and cannot discern the Divine through the limited and earthly and human, no arguments can alter the case. John, the mystic dreamer, saw the depth and breadth of Divine love and the reality of Divine Sonship in Jesus ; the shrewd and sensible Caiaphas did not ; and it was impossible to bridge the gulf.

The following experience, recorded by Dr Francis Galton, whom no one will charge with an unscientific fanaticism, may help to illustrate the foregoing remarks :—“ I have once in my life experienced the influence of personal ascendancy in that high degree which some great personalities have exercised, and the occasion of which I speak was the more striking owing to the absence of concurrent pomp. It was on Garibaldi's arrival in London, where he was hailed as a hero. I was standing in Trafalgar Square when he reached it, driving up Parliament Street. His vehicle was a shabby open carriage, stuffed with Italians, regardless of style in dress ; Garibaldi alone was standing. I had not been in a greatly excited or exalted mood, but the simplicity, goodness, and nobility impressed on every lineament of Garibaldi's face and person quite overcame me. I realised then what I never did before or after, something of the impression that Jesus seems to have

exercised on multitudes on more than one occasion. I am grateful to that experience for revealing to me the hero-worshipping potentialities of my nature.”¹

Now it seems to me clear that this kind of personal impression was the leading experience of the earliest disciples. They saw “the glory of God in the face of Christ.” “Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” He “loved me, and gave himself for me.” “The love of God in Christ Jesus.” “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Such are some of the expressions by which, apart from particular incidents in his history, this personal ascendancy was indicated. This new revelation of Divine heights and boundless possibilities in human nature dwarfed every other consideration. His teaching could be valued only as one expression of what he intrinsically was, and would naturally be regarded at first in its largest sense, as a revelation of the Spirit which worked within. The application of this Spirit to the growing requirements of the Church was a matter of serious moment, and was to be settled, not by wrangling over the meaning of particular phrases which Jesus may have used, but by an inspired intuition of the fundamental principles in his character and life. This may explain, if explanation be needed, why his teaching is so little quoted, with a formal reference, in apostolic letters. It was not till the vivid impression slowly faded away that Christianity was turned into a system of theological dogmas and moral precepts. At first it was a covenant of the Spirit. It necessarily had thoughts, and, as we now know, some erroneous thoughts, connected with it ; but its essence, at least in the higher minds, was an adoring sense of the Divine Presence and Love, which had been impressed upon the soul by Jesus Christ, and an endeavour to live the corresponding life of Divine Sonship, which had been seen in the Galilean prophet, like the glory of an only son from a father.

This exalted personal influence, which seems to me as certainly historical as the battle of Zama or the assassination

¹ *Memoirs of my Life*, p. 284 seq.

of Cæsar, does not imply intellectual infallibility. High character is, I believe, generally associated with large intelligence, and though Jesus, in his popular teaching, did not adopt the forms of the scientific intellect, and was most probably quite ignorant of Plato and Aristotle, since he was not a professor at Athens or Alexandria, I think the records sufficiently indicate a great and original intelligence, and see no reason to doubt that in suitable circumstances he could have held his own with the thinkers of Greece, and could even have mastered the treatise of Copernicus if it had been then written, and had fallen within the line of work that was assigned to him.¹ At all events an hypothesis that he was intellectually impotent would be pure assumption. But the greatest human intelligence is not exempt from mistakes, and a needed lesson which we are learning at the present day is that the divinest inspiration affords no guarantee against intellectual error and the misleading influences of age and country. For myself I may be allowed to say that this distinction, which in early life was not so easily admitted, becomes more and more evident, and such limitations or errors as may be discovered in the recorded teaching of Jesus have no effect whatever on my reverence and love. Still, that is no reason why his teaching should be made the subject of caricature; and we must attempt briefly to review its general character, and some few of its details, which have been from time to time objected to.

In the first place, we must remember that the record of his teaching is very incomplete. Even if we limit the duration of his ministry to a single year, still what has been preserved must bear a very small proportion to what he actually said. We are, therefore, not entitled, in regard to any particular point, to assume that we have the whole of what he taught,

¹ Mr Roberts says that, "If Jesus was man only, these questions are irrelevant"; so perhaps I, as a Unitarian, ought not to refer to them. But, apart from the assumption of his pure humanity, we have no evidence whatever that he was not familiar with Plato and Aristotle, and intended in time to enlighten Copernicus; so that the argument is somewhat circular.

and still less of what he thought, about it. There may have been additions, illustrations, or qualifying remarks which have been omitted, either because they were not remembered, or because they were not deemed essential by the Evangelists. Still, it seems not unreasonable to believe that the general substance of his teaching, and frequently its exact words, so far as a translation could give them, have been preserved ; and, for my part, I believe that the twelfth chapter of Romans, and the thirteenth of 1 Corinthians, and other portions of the Epistles in the New Testament, contain, so far as they go, the substance of his teaching, though probably not adhering so closely to his words as the Gospels.

In the second place, we must consider his immediate object. That appears to have been the reformation of his countrymen, not by any radical change in the forms of their religion, but by leading them to carry out in practice its finest and most spiritual principles. He came, not to destroy, but to fulfil. He was not attempting to supersede Moses and the Prophets by the establishment of an entirely new religion which would require a complete statement of doctrine and practice to be accepted by his followers. The inevitable break came in time, because Judaism refused to rise to the height of its own spiritual ideals.

In the third place, this object required the popular methods of the preacher rather than the severe study and precise expression of the thinker. Criticisms are sometimes passed upon the teaching of Jesus as though he were the author of some vast treatise, purporting to present a complete system of religious, ethical, social, and political philosophy, and laying down a code of laws for all conceivable circumstances in life. We may be thankful that this was not his plan. He was content to promulgate great principles of conduct which would bear their own fruit according to the varying conditions of human society. To treat the collection of sayings which are contained in the Sermon on the Mount as a formal law, which men are to obey as an extraneous authority, seems to me to involve an entire misconception of its character. Its

object is to enforce dispositions, and this is sometimes effected by the use of strong figurative language—cut off the right hand; pluck out the offending eye—sometimes by illustrations of the way in which they would lead men to act—leave thy gift upon the altar; if compelled to go a mile, go two. The great principles of conduct which are insisted on are capable of an infinite variety of application, and, if adopted, would certainly lead in time to great political and social changes. But these external changes are altogether subordinate to the principles from which they spring; and to the man in whose heart these principles are glowing like a heavenly fire, the circumstances of this transient life may seem, by comparison, to be hardly worth considering. The kingdom of God and his righteousness come first; the inferior blessings must surely follow. The late Professor Max Müller, who was familiar with the wisdom of East and West, of ancient and modern times, asks, “Would not the carrying out of one single commandment of Christ, ‘Love one another,’ change the whole aspect of the world, and sweep away prisons and workhouses, and envy and strife, and all the strongholds of the devil?” And again he says, “If we do a thing because we think it is our duty, we generally fail; that is the old law which makes slaves of us. The real spring of our life, and of our work in life, must be love—true, deep love—not love of this or that person, or for this or that reason, but deep human love, devotion of soul to soul, love of God realised where alone it can be, in love of those whom He loves.” Such was the method of Jesus. His teaching was, to use his own comparison, like a seed planted in the heart of society, which was to spring up according to its own laws, and bear the fruit which the providence of God might ordain; and the fact that the growth has been so stunted and the fruit so poor is largely due to the misconception which turned Christianity from a life of the Spirit into an intellectual system. For a time Love was its keynote. God was Love; Christ had loved, and offered the sacrifice of Love; and the wisest disciples knew that Love

was the fulfilling of the law, and that to be a Christian was to have the spirit of Christ; that is, to love. In the early ages men exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another";¹ but a few centuries changed all this, to the grief of some of the wisest men, and in the time of the great doctrinal controversies a heathen writer compares the Christians to wild beasts.² But the hidden leaven has not lost its vitality, and the hearts of many are still constrained by the love of Christ. The method which Jesus followed may, of course, be deemed very foolish; but his word has lasted through the ages, and appeals to simple hearts to-day, while the systems of great philosophers have long been obsolete, and never reached the common heart of mankind at all.

We may now turn to some examples of his teaching which have been made the subject of animadversion. That he accepted the general belief of his time about demons, and that he was mistaken in doing so, seems to me beyond reasonable question; and in accepting the belief he may be said, in a loose sense, to have taught it, though it is only reasonable to make a broad distinction between what a man accepts from the current thought of his time and what he emphatically teaches as his own profound conviction. But when, owing to this mistake, he is made responsible for "some of the most atrocious cruelties in history," we begin to wonder whether the critic has ever read the Gospels. I have not found there that he abused demoniacs as criminals, or chained or flogged or burned them. On the contrary, he seems to have been always full of the most compassionate sympathy towards them, and to have healed them by the commanding power of that sympathetic gentleness. If "persecution" has really drawn a sanction from "Jesus' reported attitude to possession by evil spirits," it only shows that "persecution" was as stupid and ignorant as it was brutal; for if it tried to learn how Jesus

¹ Tertullian, *Apol.*, 39.

² Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 5. I owe the reference to Professor Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 2nd ed., p. 34.

treated such cases, it would have slunk away in shame like the men who wanted to stone a sinful woman. The following story is told in the biography of Father Mathew :—"A young man was being taken by his friends to the lunatic asylum of Cork, and the treatment which he received at their hands was not such as to improve his condition. Bound on a car, his limbs tied with cords, and his head exposed to the rays of a fierce sun, he was thus being conveyed to the asylum, when the conductors conceived the idea of first taking him to Father Mathew. The idea was fortunately acted upon, and they turned the horse's head towards Lehenagh. Father Mathew's heart was filled with compassion at the spectacle of a human being bound like a wild beast, uttering strange cries, and foaming at the mouth. He spoke to him kindly and gently, and thus soothed his chafed spirit; and he then desired his friends to loose the cords that bound him, and to protect his head from the sun. The effect of the kind voice, the gentle words, and the soothing touch was marvellous upon the patient, who had suffered violent paroxysms shortly before. The poor fellow recognised Father Mathew, in whose power to serve him he seemed to have confidence, and he promised that if he were brought back home, he would do everything that he was asked to do; and upon Father Mathew's intercession, he was brought back, instead of being placed in the asylum. In a month afterwards, a fine handsome young man, well dressed and well mannered, came to Lehenagh, to return him thanks for 'what he had done for him.'"¹ I have read somewhere else of a poor fellow whom no one could tame, and who broke the chains with which thoughtful neighbours had bound him, and lived wildly in the mountains and tombs, and cut himself with stones; and one day he was found sitting clothed and in his right mind, love having been effective where chains were powerless. I venture to think that Father Mathew was the genuine Christian who had learned of Jesus, and that

¹ *Father Mathew: a Biography.* By John Francis Maguire, M.P., 1863. Mr Maguire was an intimate friend of Father Mathew's.

the others, though professing Christianity, were acting under a survival of heathenism.

Again, the teaching of Jesus in regard to divorce is severely censured as giving sanction to a principle which "has inflicted infinite suffering on half of the human race." This is a very curious inference to draw from his insistence on the absolute sanctity of the marriage relation. We must once more remember that Jesus, in dealing with this subject, is not laying down a set of laws to be put in the statute-book of nations. Where he speaks of divorce his whole object is to give a higher position to the wife than was ordinarily recognised. Instead of extending exclusive privileges to the man he is withdrawing privileges, and insists that nothing but an absolute violation of the marriage contract on the part of the wife can justify his divorcing her at all; and some of the disciples were so astonished at this restriction upon the privileges of the male sex that they said, In that case it will be better not to marry. So his teaching was objected to at first for exactly the opposite reason to that which is now brought against it. We must further remember that, when speaking of this subject, he insists on the most absolute purity on the part of the man; and if this portion of the teaching were respected, no occasion to confer the power of divorce on the part of the woman could possibly arise. He says nothing about purity of thought in the woman; are we therefore to infer that he did not care for it? The simple fact is that he lays down principles of conduct which are equally applicable to either sex. He could not alter the laws of his country and bestow upon women the right of divorce, but he could require men not to exercise their legal rights, and could announce principles which, if observed, would render all laws respecting divorce unnecessary.

If he had had the inestimable advantage of studying Plato and Aristotle, he might have announced the doctrine of female subjection more plainly than through the obscure and apparently beneficent hint which Mr Roberts has illuminated; for

he would have learned from them that "every house is monarchically governed,"¹ and that a woman's virtue consists in the good management of the household, and "being obedient to her husband."² And if his learning extended as far as Rome, he might have appealed to the example of a great orator and moralist, who divorced his wife after thirty years of married life, and took to himself a rich young bride. Or, if he could have anticipated the wisdom of Epictetus, he would have found that "women are honoured for nothing else than for appearing decorous and modest, with sobriety of mind,"³ and that we are not to be hard upon men who are unchaste before marriage,⁴ thus sanctioning in advance all the horrors of the white slave-trade.

We may further ask, What was the actual effect of Christ's teaching? Paul, who, on this subject, has received much abuse in modern times, lays down the Christian doctrine that in Jesus Christ there is no distinction of male and female.⁵ This, I think, must be taken as his fundamental and settled teaching, for the discussion does not lead up to it, and there is no practical object in view. Elsewhere Paul undoubtedly insists on the subordination of wives to their husbands;⁶ but he does so when he is anxious to secure order and dignity in the services of the Church. His first Epistle to the Corinthians is largely concerned with complaints which he had heard, and with questions which had been put to him, and it seems reasonable to suppose that some women had been taking advantage of their Christian freedom to make themselves rather a disorderly element in the meetings of the brethren. Paul makes use of the doctrine of his day, and advances arguments which certainly have an antique flavour. But even here he shows that he is not quite happy in this doctrine of subordination, for he says, by way of qualification, "Howbeit

¹ Aristotle, *Pol.*, I. vii. 1. Elsewhere he describes the union of man and woman as "aristocratic" (*Eth. Eudem.*, VII. ix. 4); but perhaps an aristocrat is not much better than a king.

² Plato, *Meno*, 71 E.

³ *Enchir.*, 62.

⁴ *Ib.*, 47.

⁵ Gal. iii. 28.

⁶ Especially in 1 Cor. xi.

neither is woman without man nor man without woman in the Lord; for as the woman is from the man, so also the man is through the woman; and all things are from God." In other words, these distinctions are conventions; and as soon as we escape into the upper air, where we see that everything is from God, and all things arranged in mutual dependence, they cease to trouble us. Elsewhere *universal* mutual subordination, a law of courtesy and kindness, is inculcated.¹ In a city like Corinth, notorious for its vice, harm might easily have affected the Christian cause if the women made an indiscreet use of their privileges; and respect for others requires us to observe many conventions which in themselves are not morally binding. Paul raises no objection to the practice of women "praying or prophesying,"² but pleads that they should not do so unveiled. Neglect of his advice would probably have occasioned more scandal in Corinth than a woman's mounting the pulpit in man's clothes would do in modern England. Most of us, while not using Paul's arguments, would think such an action "unbecoming." If Paul thought it was "disgraceful for a woman to talk in church," we have extended the disgrace to men, and, no doubt for Paul's reason, a desire that everything in church should be done with becoming reverence and order.³ If he had stretched his survey to the great tragedians, he might have only derived authority for a prohibition which I think I have somewhere seen characterised as "insolent" (for, like the ancient Corinthians, we moderns "suffer fools gladly"). Sophocles says that "silence is an ornament for women";⁴ and Euripides, that "silence and sobriety of mind, and remaining quietly at home, are for women a most beautiful thing."⁵ But whatever may be thought of Paul's attitude towards such conventions, his daring assertion that in Christ

¹ Eph. v. 21.

² 1 Cor. xi. 5.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

⁴ *Ajax*, 293, γυναῖξὶ κόσμον ἢ σιγὴ φέρει.

⁵ *Heracl.*, 477 seq., γυναῖκὶ γὰρ σιγὴ τε καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν κάλλιστον, εἴσω δ' ἥσυχον μένειεν δόμων.

Jesus there is no such thing as male and female expresses an idea which was to become largely fruitful of good, and this idea flowed from the teaching and life of Jesus.

Another early witness is Clement of Alexandria. He says, "Therefore, having embraced more fully this good obedience, let us give ourselves to the Lord, clinging, as to a cable, to the most firm portion of his faith, considering that there is the same excellence of man and woman. For if both have one God, both have also one instructor, one church, one sobriety of mind, one modesty, their nourishment common, united marriage, respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love, all things similar. But to those whose life is common, grace is common, and salvation also is common; and of these both love and education are common. . . . Therefore the name human (*anthropos*) is common to men and women."¹ I almost think that this noble passage would have been received by some of the leading sages of Greece with a shrug of the shoulders. It is only fair, however, to add that, following Paul, he recognises a subordination to her husband on the part of the married woman, though declaring that it is equally open to man and woman to partake of moral perfection.² He recognises the distinction, as it were, by way of concession, and as belonging only to this present life. This doctrine of the spiritual equality of the sexes is markedly and almost distinctively Christian; and it has been the general opinion that the elevation of woman has been far more observable in Christian than in non-Christian countries.

Passages may be cited from Early Christian writers which seem to indicate a contemptuous estimate of woman; but that which I have quoted from Clement seems to me to express the fundamental sentiment of the Christian before his religion had admitted a large infusion of pagan elements.³ Practical

¹ *Pædagog.*, I. iv.

² *Strom.*, IV. viii. and xix.

³ Dr Donaldson quotes from Clement a sentence which seems to present a much lower view of woman. He translates it thus:—"Nothing disgraceful is proper for man, who is endowed with reason; much less for

rules belong to a different region, and inevitably vary according to times and circumstances. Clement and other early Christian teachers prescribed what they regarded as the wisest rules for their own time; and it may well be that some restrictions were useful or even necessary in Alexandria or Corinth, in the midst of a heathen society, which are not needed in England in the twentieth century. The leaders of the Church had to go into these details, and it is quite possible that their judgment was sometimes at fault, though we are hardly in a position to decide. But we shall not disagree with Clement when, having censured various modes of female adornment, he exclaims, "The best beauty is that of the soul, as I have often intimated, when the soul has been adorned with the Holy Spirit, and inspired with the decorations that proceed from this, righteousness, wisdom, courage, temperance, love of goodness, and modesty, than which no more blooming colour has ever been seen."¹ But Jesus lays down none of those minute rules, which necessarily change with the progress of society and the altered spirit of man. With him Divine Love and Purity, dwelling in the heart, are the alchemy for all time, which changes our earthly dross into heavenly gold. He lays

woman, to whom it brings shame even to reflect of what nature she is."* The meaning of the original passage seems to me rather obscure. Clement is insisting that the Christian may not drink wine to excess, and dwells on the improprieties of a tipsy woman. I am inclined to think that we ought to translate, "Blamelessness is proper to a rational man; much more to a woman, to whom the mere self-consciousness of what she might be brings a sense of shame": or, as a friend translates it, "No blame is peculiar to a rational man but applies still more to a woman, to whom the consciousness of what she was brings shame." That is to say, a woman feels more natural shame at the idea of exposing herself in a state of intoxication than even a rational man. Accordingly he proceeds to inveigh against a drunken woman, because she will not hide her shamelessness. There is nothing in this derogatory to woman; but if Dr Donaldson is right, I can only suppose that Clement the Greek has for the moment got the better of Clement the Christian, for such a sentiment is quite inconsistent with the passage which I have quoted, and to which, if I am not mistaken, Dr Donaldson has not referred.

¹ *Pæd.*, III. xi., p. 291.

* *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and among the Early Christians*, p. 183. The passage referred to is *Pæd.*, II. ii., p. 186.

down principles which would banish for ever all the odious and miserable questions which arise in connection with divorce. These make their appearance only where his teaching is despised; and happily there are thousands upon thousands of sweet and holy Christian homes where the abominations of the divorce courts are never dreamt of, and where mutual love and honour render all questions of subordination superfluous.

One or two other subjects must be referred to more briefly. It has often been objected to the Sermon on the Mount that it teaches a selfish morality: we are to pray simply that we may get a reward. This seems to me an extraordinary misunderstanding of a passage which, on the face of it, teaches exactly the opposite. Our prayers are to be absolutely sincere, not offered where we might gain a reputation for unusual piety, but in the privacy of our chambers, where God alone can see. The hypocrites who desire to have their devoutness applauded have their reward, or, perhaps better, their wages—the wages which the world pays to hypocrisy; they get what they seek. The word translated reward is omitted when we come to sincere prayer: “Thy Father, who seeth in secret, will render to thee.” Render what? No doubt, the object of our prayer. If we pray for love, God will render to us a fuller and deeper love. If we pray for faith or righteousness, God will render to us a clearer insight, a calmer trust, or a holier conscience. The principle of such a statement surely is that we are to seek goodness solely for its own sake, that all seeking must be in dependence upon God, and that all prayer must be absolutely simple, an opening of the secret heart to God. To twist this into a selfish morality, which offers prayers merely for the sake of getting some reward for being apparently devout, seems to me the very perversity of spurious criticism.

Mr Roberts declares, “Provident regard for the future is utterly condemned. ‘Take no thought for the morrow’ is an absolute injunction”; and he seems greatly pleased that the world has shown itself superior to this foolish precept. A note to Pope’s translation of the *Odyssey* says: “When critics find

fault, they ought to take care that they impute nothing to an author but what the author really speaks, otherwise it is not criticism, but calumny and ignorance." On the justice of this remark I must allow the readers to pronounce. I am sure Mr Roberts would not willingly lapse into the fault which is here stigmatised; but I fear that in this case he has yielded to one of those deluding naps to which even the "good Homer" occasionally succumbed. As Macaulay would have observed, "every schoolboy knows" that there is no such precept as Mr Roberts quotes in the Sermon on the Mount, and that its appearance in the Authorised Version is due to a phrase which, in its modern meaning, has become a glaring mistranslation, and accordingly has been altered by the revisers. It is not necessary to remind readers of the HIBBERT JOURNAL that the precept is directed against the distrustful "anxiety" which makes the "word" unfruitful.¹ It will be a happier as well as a better world when men are filled with the quiet content of an assured trust, and, having fulfilled their duties, leave their outward lot without doubt or fear to the disposal of Providence.

Strongly as I dissent from Mr Roberts' estimate of the teaching of Jesus, and plainly as I have expressed that dissent, I have not wished to show any disrespect to his character and attainments. In the arena of educated opinion a kindly intellectual tournament can do no harm. It is an age when many frail structures are tottering to their fall, and many random blows are given in the hurly-burly; but I believe that the impression produced by the great Prophet of Nazareth will come purified and exalted out of the struggle. Christianity has still its grandest victories to win. It is still the one commanding influence that fights against the cruelty and selfishness in men's hearts. Long may it be before the world has cast away the deep and solemn wisdom of Jesus Christ, and ceased to be influenced by his holy impersonation of grace and truth.

JAMES DRUMMOND.

¹ See the explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Matt. xiii.

THE JESUS OF HISTORY AND THE CHRIST OF RELIGION.

THE APPROACH TOWARD CONSISTENCY.

BENJAMIN W. BACON, D.D.

Yale University, U.S.A.

THE demand for consistency which Rev. Mr Roberts has so searchingly put in the January issue of the *HIBBERT JOURNAL* is one which has attended Christianity from the day that it became a religion, and must necessarily attend it to the end, in view of the conditions of its origin. A thinker no less profound than Hegel has assured us that each of two factors is essential to the adequate conception of it: (1) the moral and religious Teaching of Jesus; (2) the Representation of the Divine Idea in the drama of Jesus' career.¹ These two factors were blended in the teaching of the faith from Pentecost onward; but the adjustment of the one to the other was the most fundamental issue in the great controversy between Paul and the Galilean apostles, even if not apparent upon the surface—for the external forms of controversies are determined by temporary and local occasions; and it still remains so, when in our own time we discuss the question: "Is the ultimate test of religious truth historical or philosophical?" or, more concretely, "Jesus or Paul: which was the founder of the faith?" The adjustment sought is not likely to be reached by the elimination, or obscuration, of either factor, however the

¹ *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. iii. p. 85 (Engl. transl.).

history of Christian thought may seem to oscillate between the two poles of ethics and mysticism; because the very origins of our faith, and the New Testament itself, the fundamental source-book for every type of Christianity past, present, or future, display this polarity of structure in supreme degree.

No scholar of our time, however conservative, questions the essential propriety of the principle that the simple facts of Jesus' earthly career and teaching are to be sought in Synoptic tradition rather than in the Fourth Gospel. The fourth evangelist, no matter by what name we call him, treats his subject in a speculative and theological sense—in short, from the mystical or Pauline point of view—to a degree which renders his gospel relatively unfit for employment in this historico-critical inquiry, a purpose for which it was not intended. The Synoptic gospels, after proper analysis of their literary structure, sources, and interrelation, and a testing of the variability of the tradition regarding Jesus' teaching and career which they embody, are those which must furnish us, in the main, our outline of history for the period up to, and inclusive of, the crucifixion. And on this basis it is undeniable that the Representation of the Divine Idea is an entirely subordinate factor. Considering the facts known to us from the Epistles and book of Acts, which show that the whole period of upwards of forty years during which this evangelic tradition in relatively plastic form was being gradually moulded to the requirements of a Greek-speaking, Gentile and Pauline Church was a period of the most intense, yes, ecstatic, promulgation of a teaching which centres in the person of Christ as a divinely commissioned, if not pre-existent, world-Redeemer, "manifested as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," it is truly astonishing to observe to how small a degree the evangelic tradition of Jesus' earthly career has been affected by the later faith. If we take the entire Synoptic contents as they stand, we cannot discern a trace of the Pauline doctrines of pre-existence and

incarnation, and only the faintest traces, in crudest form, of a doctrine of the atonement.

A further step backward confirms and strengthens this impression. The very first and simplest attempts at documentary analysis, commended to us by ancient Church tradition itself, regarding the two fundamental strands, Matthæan and Petrine, relating the "sayings" and "doings" of Jesus respectively,¹ produce the most startling results for those who think of the evangelic tradition as centering, like the epistolary and apocalyptic literature ("prophecy") of the early Church, on the person of Christ, his atoning death and triumphant resurrection. First of all, agreement between our evangelists utterly disappears at the beginning and end of their story. The genealogies and the story of the miraculous birth, with its attendant prodigies, must be cancelled from that element of common matter which has found place in parallel reports, because it formed part of the generally received tradition. The sources are here in hopeless, irreconcilable contradiction. The same must be said regarding the stories of "manifestations" to the apostles, advanced as proofs of the *bodily* resurrection. The fundamental source, Mark, in our day universally admitted to constitute the main narrative substratum of each of the other Synoptics, disappears entirely. The authentic Mark contains *no account of any resurrection appearance whatever*. Matthew and Luke follow hopelessly discordant and unrelated traditions in their attempt to make good this manifest deficiency, the one making Galilee the scene of the manifestations, the other excluding Galilee and confining all appearances to the vicinity of Jerusalem. *Neither*

¹ The distinction is not confined to the well-known statement of "the Elder" transmitted through Papias to the Church fathers generally. It appears also in our third evangelist's own characterisation of his "former treatise," which is indeed in its two main factors a relation of "the things which Jesus began both to do and to teach" (ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν) (Acts i. 1). It appears no less distinctly in the structural form of our first canonical gospel, which, like our third, is also a combination of the precepts with the (Markan) tradition of the "doings," but with less attempt to produce a consecutive story. The teachings are set in topical blocks.

Matthew's narrative nor Luke's has any resemblance to that securely established as giving the original and authentic course of events in the careful and detailed enumeration of Paul.¹

When by cancellation of the manifestly extraneous and independent material of Matthew and Luke we come down to the central mass of common tradition, we find it to consist, as anciently reported, of an element of Narrative (substantially our Mark) and an element of the Teaching. The latter consists of masses of agglutinated sayings of Jesus. It is but slightly, if at all, considered in our second gospel, but is combined with that second on different structural plans by each of the two others. This common source of Matthew and Luke embodying the Sayings is usually designated Q.² Modern critics, with very few exceptions, agree with ancient tradition in regarding it as older than Mark, and as indicating its Palestinian origin by traces of translation from a Semitic tongue. As reconstructed, *e.g.* by Harnack,³ it represents our nearest practicable approach to that "syntagma of the sayings in the Hebrew tongue" attributed in primeval Church tradition to the apostle Matthew, "prepared for the (Aramaic-speaking) converts from Judaism"⁴ in Syria before Matthew's "departure,"⁵ "while Peter and Paul were preaching, and founding the Church in Rome."⁶ If, then, we ask the questions: What relative value appears to be attached to the Pauline

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3-8, 11.

² The older designation L or Λ (Λόγια) is now generally abandoned as implying a *petitio principii* by assuming the identity of the source extricated by comparison of Matthew and Luke after subtraction of Mark with the Matthæan Syntagma reported by Papias. Professor E. D. Burton, of Chicago University, in his *Principles of Literary Criticism* (Chicago, 1904), goes to the other extreme. Taking the two divisions into which Luke has distributed his non-Markan material common to Matthew, he designates the former (Luke vi. 20-viii. 3) the Galilean document (G), and the latter (Luke ix. 51-xviii. 14) the Peræan (P). This nomenclature seems hardly likely to prevail.

³ *Sprüche und Reden Jesu: die zweite Quelle des Matthäus und Lukas*, von A. Harnack, Leipzig, 1907. Engl. transl., 1908.

⁴ Origen *ap.* Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI. xxv. 4.

⁵ Eusebius, *H.E.*, III. xxiv. 6.

⁶ Irenæus, *Her.*, III. i. 1, *ap.* Eusebius, *H.E.*, V. viii. 2.

conception of the gospel *sub specie æternitatis*, and the pre-Pauline, as we go backward from Mark to Q? What constitutes for each respectively "the" gospel?—the result will be no less startling than before. For Paul, as we know, the mere report of the sayings and doings of Jesus' earthly career was an altogether subordinate feature of the apostolic message. "The" gospel concerned itself supremely with the risen Christ, "the Lord from heaven." His career upon earth was the merest brief interruption of a glory without beginning or ending, "in the likeness of God." It had significance because, to use Hegel's phrase, it "represented the divine idea." In the self-humiliation of the Son unto the death of the cross God commended his love to the sinner, his willingness to save. In the subsequent manifestation of the Crucified as "the Son of God with power" by the resurrection, he gave assurance unto all men of the coming judgment, a judgment unto death, or else unto eternal life by becoming "conformed to the image of his Son."¹ In the sense of radical subordination of the element of the precepts of Jesus to the element of his person and work as "the Son of God with power," Mark is a thoroughly Pauline gospel. It is equally so in many subordinate features of style and phraseology. In its whole structure it aims to present (1) the Person of "Jesus Christ the Son of God" as the object of faith; (2) his example of self-devotion unto the cross as the pathway to eternal life. It proceeds from the Baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with power," as an adoption to Sonship and endowment with the plenitude of charismatic gifts, to the Transfiguration, exhibiting Jesus as the Lord from heaven, type in his "body of glory" of that into which his followers are to be "transfigured"² at the resurrection. It ends with the crucifixion and (predicted) resurrection of "the Son of God."³ In outline, accordingly,

¹ See the context, Rom. viii. 28–30.

² The Pauline expression in 2 Cor. iii. 18 (*μεταμορφούμεθα*) is the same as Mark's in the Transfiguration scene (*μετεμορφώθη*, Mark ix. 3).

³ The teaching how to "inherit eternal life" only begins in Mark with the revelation of the doctrine of the Cross (Mark viii. 27–38). In Matthew it

as well as in individual points of doctrine, Mark is devoutly Pauline. Yet the ancient Church tradition which declares it to embody the authentic story of Peter has deep and sure justification. The opening, the central, and the closing scenes place Peter's personality next to that of Jesus himself; and while a decided hostility appears in the present form to exaggerated claims of prerogative for Peter, for the Galilean apostles, or for the kindred of the Lord, and may be connected with the mutilation which has robbed this gospel of its original ending, there can be no doubt that if we possessed this ending in its primitive form it would be found similarly characterised. It gave to Peter the same right to be called the founder of the Church in the resurrection faith that Paul does when he gives as the essence of the common apostolic witness that the glorified Christ "appeared to *Cephas*, then to the twelve."¹ Our Gospel of Mark, then, may be regarded as a drastic Pauline recast of the primitive Petrine tradition. According to "the Elder," this Petrine preaching included both elements, "whether things said or things done by the Lord." From Paul's comparison of the apostleship to the circumcision whereunto "God energised in Peter" with his own, and his references to the common content of all apostolic preaching as a witness to God's manifestation of the glorified Christ, it is certain that in this its central feature Peter's gospel was indeed identical with Paul's. It presented "Jesus as Lord," manifested as such by the resurrection, and it offered "forgiveness of sins" in his name. To what extent it carried back the conception of Jesus as "the Lord from heaven" into the pre-resurrection

begins with the New Law of the Sermon on the Mount. Compare Matthew's treatment of the Rich Youth's Inquiry (Matt. xix. 16-22) with Mark's (x. 17-22).

¹ This is implied in Mark xiv. 28 and xvi. 7, and confirmed by outside sources, such as the *Ev. Petri*, John xxi., etc., which retain traces of the story. The present ending, from Mark xv. 40-xvi. 8, appears to have been substituted for the Petrine tradition partly in the interest of the more concrete form of the resurrection doctrine in the post-Pauline period. It has itself been mutilated by cancellation after xvi. 8, perhaps in the interest of harmony. See Bacon, *Beginnings of Gospel Story*, Yale University Press, 1909.

period is an extremely doubtful point. Much of the attempt to present the whole story of the ministry as permeated and dominated by the supernatural might be due to the special thaumaturgic interest of our second evangelist, who presents almost the whole Galilean ministry from the standpoint of a conflict between the power of the evil spirits and the power of the Spirit of God wherewith Jesus is endowed at his baptism. The latter suggests an idealisation of the convert's experience in baptism into sonship and endowment with the Spirit. A comparison with Paul, who not only makes no reference anywhere to a single "mighty work" of Jesus, and ignores exorcism, but positively deprecates the disposition to prefer the spectacular gifts, such as "tongues," "miracles," "prophecies," to the inward and "abiding," and a further comparison with Q, wherein the mighty works are not proofs of Jesus' power, but attendant signs of the gracious nearness of the heavenly Father, make it certain that we must discount much from the Markan representation on the score of the evangelist's personal predilection. But on the other hand the story of the opening Sabbath of healings and exorcisms about Peter's house in Capernaum belongs among the most authentic elements of the tradition. Moreover, the book of Acts preserves a partially independent, and in many respects primitive, representation of the preaching of Peter; and in this too the story of Jesus' earthly career began "from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached," as an account of how "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," so that "he went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed of the devil."¹ To Peter too even the recollections of his earthly walk with Jesus would seem to have been transfigured in the light of the resurrection vision. Yet how simple is the figure of the prophet whom God according to promise had "raised up from among his brethren, and sent him to bless them in turning away every one of them from their iniquities,"² as compared with Mark's transcendental

¹ Acts x. 37, 38.

² Acts iii. 22-26.

thaumaturgist! A long step has been taken on the road to apotheosis when we pass from this primitive conception of Jesus as the anointed prophet "whom the heaven must receive until the time of the restoration of all things," when God "will send him again to be the Christ,"¹ to the conception of one who *was already* the Christ in the full transcendental sense while he walked the earth, recognised everywhere by the supernatural insight of his terrified opponents the demons, and secretly known as such to those entrusted with "the mystery of the kingdom," though the eyes of Israel were holden that they should not know him.

If the Petrine tradition of Jesus' earthly career reduces itself upon critical scrutiny to this simple residuum, what shall be said of the Matthæan? How much remains of "the Christ of religion" when we reach that earliest element of Synoptic tradition, Q, the one source generally acknowledged by both the most ancient and the most modern inquiry to be truly apostolic in authorship and historical in intention?

We need not go to the full length of Harnack's astounding conclusion that this most primitive of all attempts to embody the "Way" of Christian faith *had no mention whatever of passion or resurrection*. We shall, however, be obliged to admit that, like the Greek gospel which has inherited its name, the Matthæan Syntagma must have aimed primarily to teach the convert "to observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded," rather than to convert to repentance and faith in the crucified and risen Son of God. The figure of Jesus presented by the primitive Matthew was that of the ideal "scribe of the kingdom of heaven," a prophet like unto Moses, whose law was that of the new covenant, inward, written on the heart, transcending, yet not annulling, the law and the prophets, an easy yoke of simple goodness like the Father's, yet as such exceeding the righteousness of scribe and Pharisee. If the Sayings ever circulated as sayings only, without an introduction to bring the divinely ordained Teacher to "Moses' seat," and

¹ Ver. 20, 21.

an epilogue to commend his precepts by an account of how "the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God,"¹ then Q can never have been intended to stand alone. Either in oral or written form a narrative beginning and ending, showing by what authority the new lawgiver appeared, and how the issue had not condemned but confirmed his teaching, was indispensable to the circulation of such a document as "the gospel" of any Christian community.² We may argue from the fact that Matthew and Luke found almost nothing wherewith to supplement in common their versions of Mark's passion and resurrection story, either that Q's account was too meagre to attract their interest, or that Luke, who does here add much from a non-Markan source, had different views from Matthew as to the relative value of the two accounts, Matthew preferring Mark. But such a preference on Matthew's part cannot be accounted for, nor can we account for the idealising, almost sentimental character of much of Luke's addition, on the supposition that the primitive Matthæan Syntagma of the Sayings, or even a secondary form of it, had any such treatment of the story of the cross and resurrection as a Pauline conception of "the gospel" would inevitably have produced.

This analysis of the historical sources in comparison with the Pauline gospel makes it possible to see how profoundly significant was that division of the evangelic tradition into tradition of the teaching and tradition of the "doings" of Jesus, or rather between combinations of the two, such as Mark, the *Grundschrift* of Synoptic story, and a mere Syntagma of "the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus."³ It corresponds to the modern division between the adherent of the Ethical Culture Society and the "evangelical." It

¹ Mark xvi. 19.

² Wernle (*Synoptische Frage*, p. 226) and others consider the Baptism and Temptation stories and connected material, the Centurion's Servant, and a few other narrative elements common to Matthew and Luke but absent from Mark, to belong to a narrative framework supplied to Q by a later hand (Q²).

³ 1 Tim. vi. 3.

corresponds to the division between Paul and the adherents of James at Jerusalem, who were "all zealots for the law" and gravely suspicious of the Pauline doctrine of the cross.¹ It corresponds to the essentially dual aspect of the Christian faith, which began as a gospel preached *by* Jesus in Galilee to publicans and sinners; but which experienced a new birth in the resurrection as a gospel *about* Jesus proclaimed to every creature. The common starting-point for all types of preachers was the manifestation of the risen Lord.² To James this was a seal of divine approval upon "the royal law" which Jesus had preached as the road to forgiveness and sonship. To Paul it was a solution of the hopeless conflict between flesh and spirit by an act of God, commending at once his love and his righteousness, unveiling the hidden wisdom of a perplexing creation as a "working of all things together for good to them that were called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his (glorified) Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."³ The Church has followed Peter in a more or less vacillating and illogical, but practically salutary, attempt to occupy both poles of doctrine, that which centres in the earthly Jesus, and that which centres in the heavenly Christ.

On the whole it is surprising that a Church whose centre of gravity was so rapidly passing from the Aramaic-speaking, Syrian mother-community to the Greek-speaking, Gentile Christendom of Paul, should have retained so large an element of Petrine and Matthæan evangelic tradition, with so small an admixture of Pauline Christology. The Fourth Gospel is an example of what the story of Jesus might have been expected to become when developed in the principal seat of Greek Christian thought, the headquarters of Paul's independent mission-field. Here the Synoptic background is scarcely any longer traceable; the whole career of Jesus is viewed *sub specie æternitatis*. The gospel begins with the eternity of God and the indwelling Logos. The incarnation

¹ Acts xxi, 21.² 1 Cor. xv. 3-8, 11.³ Rom. viii. 28-30.

and atonement are its principal theme. Its parting message is eternal life through faith: "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing ye may have life in his name."¹ It is only what might have been expected from the predominance of Greek thought in the development of early Christian doctrine that the Fourth Gospel should rapidly have overcome the handicap of its late appearance, and together with the Pauline Epistles have dictated the Christology of the first ecumenical councils. For eighteen centuries Christianity has been interpreted by its theologians from the Pauline point of view, *sub specie æternitatis*. But the Matthæo-Petrine basis has never been eliminated, however obscured. From time to time it has reasserted itself in protest against the speculative system. At all times it has had larger influence upon the plain man in the street and the "unchurched." To-day there are more vigorous signs than ever before that the dominance of the Pauline, Greek interpretation of "the gospel" is coming to an end. Will it disappear? Should it disappear? Have we a real "gospel" if the drama of incarnation, atonement, resurrection ceases to be for us a "representation of the divine idea"?

The keen scalpel of historical criticism has been remorselessly applied to the evangelic tradition, and we have witnessed the result. The Jesus of history appears in the simple light of a champion of the "unchurched" Israelite protesting against the usurped authority of the scribes who sit in Moses' seat and hold the keys of knowledge, but use their place only to bind heavy burdens of outward prescription, and to exclude the multitude from the inheritance of sons. Yet they enter not in themselves, because with all their professions of "knowing God" they have not that knowledge which only the filial

¹ John xx. 31. The appendix which follows in chapter xxi. is not a part of the original composition. It is added to commend the book to the wider Christian public, and therefore aims to accommodate "Johannine" to Petrine tradition and authority.

spirit can give.¹ Since the preaching of repentance by John the Baptist, with the accompanying non-legal rite of simple ablution, to which the "people of the land," to the disdain of the scribes and Pharisees, had resorted as indeed "from heaven," the reign of "the law and the prophets" as the only key to the kingdom of heaven was ended. Jesus believed that the days of the "new covenant" had come, when God should "put his law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts, so that they should teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all should know him, from the least of them to the greatest of them, and their sin and iniquity he would remember no more."² Jesus took the place of John as champion of the lowly against the legalists, and claimed for every man who would do the will of the Father by imitation of the Spirit and disposition of the All-merciful, the right to be called a son of God. In that definition of duty and destiny he has once for all reduced religion itself to its simplest, its ultimate terms. There is nothing further to be said in the name of religion for the guidance of humanity than is implied in the three syllables of Jesus' message: "Our Father." This is the gospel; the rest is commentary. The more the historical critic can do to reduce the story of Jesus' earthly career to this sublime simplicity, the more uniquely is Jesus exalted. So far as light and leading are concerned, so long as man struggles for the guidance of hope and faith in adjusting himself to the mysterious universe in which his lot is cast; so long as he aspires to realise the highest possibilities of individual and social welfare, the message of Jesus will embody his whole gospel. Just because it is the simplest, purest expression of the truth as revealed to the pure in heart, axiomatic once formulated, though but a vague instinct of the soul until expression has come to it through a true Son of God, it remains eternally self-verified to every man that hears his word.

¹ Matt. xi. 25-30 = Luke x. 21-24. See my interpretation of the passage in the *Harvard Theol. Review*, July 1909, "Jesus the Son of God."

² Jer. xxxi. 31-34 in abstract.

But it is not merely—it is not chiefly—light and leading that we need. This groaning humanity has had experience through its every member of Paul's conflict. We have found "a law of sin in our members warring against the law of our mind, bringing us into captivity to sin and death." The evil that we would not, that we do, and to do the good we would is not present with us. Deliverance, power, life we must have, and have it now.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,

'Tis life, more life, we want.

This it is which Paul finds in the story of the cross and resurrection regarded as a "representation of the divine idea." What *happened* to this Jesus, the proclaimer of forgiveness and sonship without the yoke of the law? What had *God* to say to the matter, who speaks not in words but in deeds? It is absurd to talk of the Christian religion to the neglect of this factor, which historically has made it what it is.

We know far better the history of this factor of Christianity than of the other, because in the indubitably authentic letters of Paul we are assured of all that is essential to the process by which he himself came to that gospel which he declares to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."¹ Not only so; it is precisely in this field of persistently recurrent psychological experience, *and only here*, that an absolute test of the trustworthiness of the gospel lies within the reach of every man. The tests of historical criticism have been applied to the evangelic tradition of the Galilean apostles. The gospel of Paul calls for quite another form of criticism. After the historian and interpreter have done their work the psychologist and philosopher must have their say. But the ultimate decision must rest, as before, in assent or dissent of the individual human soul, on the basis of its own inner experience.

The process by which Paul came to his gospel was certainly exceptional, perhaps on the physical side in some

¹ Rom. i. 16.

degree morbid or pathological. When both historical critic and psychologist have had their say, much of the accepted supernaturalism of Paul's conversion may disappear. It may turn out that the "manifestation of God's Son in" him was due to the indirect influence of the historic Jesus, rather than to a direct interposition of the risen Christ. But if it should, natural law will have won nothing more than its old familiar triumph, a discovery of the divine *modus operandi*—second causes which only witness the more surely of the prior first cause. Paul's interpretation of his experience and the experience of his predecessors in the new faith will be at fault; it may require to be superseded. But the experience itself will remain. It will not only remain, but be repeated with each successive generation which is able with Paul to lay hold upon eternal life, to find through faith in Jesus the life which is "hid with Christ in God." Whether Paul's interpretation of the apostolic "manifestations" was psychologically correct or incorrect, it remains a cardinal fact of history that the faith in God our Father which Jesus preached and exemplified in life and death became in fact the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and is to-day progressively redeeming the world. To as many as received him, to them he has given the right to become children of God; and these are conscious of a life which is not their own, but Christ that liveth in them—a life which, participating in his perfect surrender to the will of the Father in obedience and trust, feels itself born again of water and the Spirit; and because it is of the Spirit of God, reasonably calls itself the eternal life.

The Pauline theology is primarily Paul's interpretation of his own spiritual experience. His few references to the historical circumstances indicate that it was in all essential features similar to that which had come first to Peter, then to others who had companied with Jesus in Galilee and become saturated with his spirit. In all probability Paul's conversion would not have taken precisely the ecstatic form that it did but for his knowledge of these experiences. In particular, we

recall the apostrophe of Stephen, appealing from his murderers to the heavenly Judge "standing at the right hand of God." We may be very sure that this momentous conversion would not have occurred at all had not Saul the persecutor seen in this same Jesus the arch-enemy of "righteousness," through his proclamation of access to God, forgiveness, sonship, "without the yoke of the law." It was Paul's own experience in the conflict of flesh against spirit that taught him at last the hopelessness of any other way of salvation. When it pleased God, who (as he came to believe) had separated him from his mother's womb that he might proclaim this gospel among the Gentiles, to reveal his Son in Paul, this revelation became the solution of his despair, the despair of humanity. Paul had seen the Christ of religion. He had come to know a human life glorified and made eternal in the divine. What does it matter through what physiological, psychological, or transcendental processes the result was accomplished?

Christianity is asked to establish consistency between its two factors, the teaching of the earthly Jesus, and its own experience of the risen Christ, "the power of God unto salvation," which since Pentecost has been operative in the world for the redemption of individuals and of the social order. Paul and the Greek fathers who followed him seized upon the Stoic conception of the Logos, which under the designation Wisdom had long since begun to affect Hebrew, or at least Hellenistic, thought. Paul combined it with other ideas drawn from the transcendental phantasmagoria of apocalypse and from the current Jewish eschatology. He interpreted the story of the cross, the "manifestations," the gifts of the Spirit in forms drawn from the avatar doctrines of the East, from the chthonic mysteries of Greek Hermetic religion, from rabbinic doctrines of creation and fall, divine justice and penal satisfaction, demonology and angelology—from where you will. What of it? That is Paul's interpretation. We are not bound to it. Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom we believe? And if by believing we have

found life in Jesus' name, the interpretation of the method may be left to the critics and the philosophers. If they can correlate in a coherent, logical system on the one hand the message of Jesus, eternally self-verified in the witness of the soul, on the other the experience of the Church, conscious of participation through its risen Lord in the eternal life of God, attested age after age by the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," well and good. If not, a later age may do better. Meantime, it is not altogether a "creed outworn" that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses."¹ To the end Christianity will rest, as it always has rested, not on the teaching of Jesus alone, but on the "representation of the divine idea" apparent in his life, his suffering and death, his achievement, for as many as received him, of eternal salvation and "the right to become children of God." The interpretation of the drama is likely to continue for some time to come to employ many of the terms and conceptions of Pauline and Johannine thought, at the risk of seeming inconsistency.

B. W. BACON.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19.

JESUS OR CHRIST?

THE REV. PRINCIPAL J. E. CARPENTER, D.LITT.

THE present generation is slowly witnessing a profound change in the traditional conceptions of Christianity. The literary criticism of its earliest documents, though many questions still remain unsettled, has brought to light a whole series of facts concerning the methods by which the primitive Gospel records were compiled which have silenced the older controversies about inspiration. The debts of the first Christian teachers to the Judaism whence they sprang are better understood in the light of the vast and varied knowledge accumulated by devoted students of Rabbinic lore. Still more important is the recovery of the long series of apocalyptic books delineating the hopes of Israel for deliverance and freedom, the resurrection and the judgment, the new heavens and the new earth. Nor can the wider studies of anthropology and the great historic religions be any longer ignored. Far, far back, in immemorial antiquity, the springs of West Asiatic culture have been tracked in ancient Babylonia. One after another of the conquerors of the past became in turn the teacher of the seers and sages of Palestine. Exposed to fresh impulses from various quarters, Judaism itself became more complex. By the century before the birth of Jesus its whole outlook on the world had passed into new phases compared with the older conceptions of its sacred law. New notions of the universe and its inhabitants had established themselves in popular thought; and under the influences of travel and residence abroad, in contact with Mesopotamia, Persia,

Syria, Egypt, Greece, the religion of Israel showed an astonishing power of absorbing alien elements, and providing itself with a variegated outfit of mythological ideas.

It was inevitable that these ideas should profoundly influence a movement which sprang up in their midst. The first article of the Christian creed, that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, was in part based upon them. The Early Church became in consequence the immediate heir of the multiform expectations which gathered round this mysterious personality. One attribute and title after another is ascribed to him; until the Teacher and Prophet of Galilee can be addressed, in one of the latest books of the New Testament, as "my Lord and my God,"¹ and in another described, in terms elsewhere applied only to the Almighty, as "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."² The problem which Mr Roberts sets forth in the words of modern theologians is thus in reality a problem of the first century. There are two ways of dealing with it. On the one hand, the Christian Church has sought in its creeds to formulate a conception of the person of Jesus Christ which shall be true to both aspects of its Founder and Head, and presents him accordingly as at the same time "perfect God and perfect Man." On the other hand, the modern method of historical science inquires whether the recorded facts of his career can be harmonised with such a hypothesis; and if the answer be in the negative, it further endeavours to explain the process by which the exalted doctrine was thus early reached. It is in this direction that research has recently been especially engaged. German scholarship, laborious, minute, exact, has led the way in the works of Gunkel, Bousset, Deissmann, and a brilliant band of fellow-workers. The study of the marvellous panorama of religions in the Roman Empire, the ideas and rites of oriental cults, the associations and mysteries spread through the Mediterranean lands, their sentiments of devotion and their moral ideals, the homage to the Cæsar

¹ John xx. 28.

² Rev. xxii. 13.

whose birthday was hailed under the name of "gospel" as the birthday of a god,¹ or whose secretary wrote, at his imperial master's dictation, "Dominus et Deus noster," —all these and manifold other elements must be taken into account along with the great central fact of all, the person, the word, the work of Jesus himself.

I.

Among the difficulties presented at the outset to the historic imagination is that of accommodating the higher conceptions of Jesus with the traditional ideas of Jewish monotheism. The prophecy of the eighth century, the impassioned exhortations of the Deuteronomists, fill their scene with Israel and Yahweh. But (thanks first of all, in this country, to Professor Cheyne) we have learned to people the background before which these two great personalities appear, and the imperfect hints which the Old Testament presents receive all kinds of amplifications before we reach the New. Meantime the world itself becomes more complicated, and seven heavens rise above the earth, corresponding to the Babylonian system founded on the sun, moon, and five planets. For a universe conceived on this more elaborate scale new series of inhabitants must be provided. As Enoch is conducted to the first heaven he sees there the rulers of the orders of the stars, the angels who guard the treasures of ice and snow, of cloud and dew.³ Jewish imagination placed angels or spirits behind hail and hoar-frost, behind wind and thunder, behind cold and heat, even behind the changing seasons, with a vigorous animism delightful to the anthropologist.⁴ In the upper worlds were innumerable ranks of loftier beings of mingled good and ill, the thrones and lordships, the principalities, authorities, and powers, so often named by the apostle Paul.⁵ Those that were hostile or rebellious

¹ See the inscription of Priênê, dated by Mommsen 11 or 9 B.C., "ἡρξεν δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ τῶν δι' αὐτὸν εὐαγγελίων ἡ γενέθλιος τοῦ θεοῦ."

² Sueton., *Dom.*, 13.

³ *Secrets of Enoch*, iii.—vi.

⁴ *Jubilees*, ii. 2.

⁵ *Cp.* Rom. viii. 38, Col. i. 16; and *Secrets of Enoch*, xx. 1.

against the establishment of the rule of God, it would be the task of the Messiah to overcome and bring to nought,¹ among them being the "rulers of this world" who had been the real agents of the crucifixion;² and when they came up for judgment, the followers of the Messiah would join with condemnation in the great assize.³

Here, too, were the celestial counterparts of the localities of earth; the Paradise (in the third heaven) into which the apostle Paul believed himself to have been caught up;⁴ the "Jerusalem that is above," which was shown to Adam, to Abraham, and Moses, and was seen in the visions of the Apocalypse descending from the sky.⁵ And there, likewise, in the fourth heaven, was the altar where Michael, prince-angel of the people of Israel, served as heavenly high-priest, and acted as advocate and intercessor for the nation. Exalted indeed was his personality. He was one of the Four great Angels of the Presence. He bears in his hand the oath which governs creation and directs the world.⁶ He had been Israel's guide amid the vicissitudes of its history. Through him had the Law been given to Moses, so that he was designated as the "mediator between God and man."⁷ He led the people through the wilderness, and intervened, sometimes successfully and sometimes ineffectually, at the crises of its fate. Later imagination credited him with having arrested the attack of Sennacherib, but supposed that he had failed to persuade the Almighty to save Israel from Nebuchadnezzar. He contended with Samuel for the body of Moses,⁸ and would finally summon the angelic hosts to battle with the great dragon, whom he would overthrow like the Messiah with whom he had so much in common.⁹ That such a being should be invoked in distress was natural. Even the New Testament has its warnings

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 24-25.

² 1 Cor. ii. 8 (most probable interpretation).

³ 1 Cor. vi. 3.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4; *Secrets of Enoch*, viii. 1.

⁵ Gal. iv. 26; *Test. Twelve Patr.*, Dan., v. 12; *Apoc. Baruch*, iv. 3-5; Rev. xxi. 2, 10.

⁶ *Enoch*, lxix. 15-23.

⁷ *Test. Twelve Patr.*, Dan., vi. 2, with Charles's note.

⁸ Jude 9.

⁹ Rev. xii. 7; *cp. Cheyne, Bible Problems*, pp. 213-235.

against angel-worship ;¹ and the Synagogue found it necessary to enjoin that "when a man is in need he must pray directly to God, and neither to Michael nor to Gabriel."²

Many dim forms pass through the mazes of later Jewish literature, the Shekhinah, the Metatron, the Memra or Word, the Power and the Wisdom of God, with other attributes half-personalised, obscure and elusive figures to which it is by no means always clear how much of separate existence is to be ascribed. Some objects are caught up into a realm of being which is variously interpreted as purely ideal, belonging only to the thought of God, or as possessed of some kind of actual subsistence in the spheres above,—the heavenly Law, into which God looked when he would create the world, the throne of glory, the Patriarchs, Israel, the sanctuary, and the Messiah's name³ (equivalent in the philosophy of an older day to his personality or essence). In the *Assumption of Moses* (composed about the beginning of our era) Moses is said to have been created before the world, and mysteriously reserved as a future instrument of the divine purpose. So it is not surprising that the radiant form of the Son of Man, identified in the Book of Enoch with the Messiah, should be presented as brought into being before sun and stars.⁴ Strange, indeed, were the conceptions of the first man, and stranger still the arguments by which they were supported. From a perversion of Ps. cxxxix. 5, interpreted as "thou hast formed me behind and before," it was inferred that he was created in spirit before the first day, and in actual body as Adam after the last day of creation.⁵ A bold equation of the spirit which moved on the face of the waters with the spirit of King Messiah (Isaiah xi. 2) then served to connect the Messiah with the first man, whose appearance is elsewhere described⁶ as like a

¹ Col. ii. 18 ; Rev. xix. 8, xxii. 8, 9.

² Jerus., *Berach.*, ix. 13a, cited by Dr Max Seligsohn in *Jew. Encycl.*, viii., p. 537.

³ *Midr. on Genesis*, tr. Wünsche, p. 2.

⁴ *Enoch*, xlviii. 2-3.

⁵ *Midr. on Genesis*, tr. Wünsche, p. 30. Cp. Taylor, *Pirqê Aboth*, p. 71.

⁶ *Secrets of Enoch*, xxx. 11.

second angel in an honourable, great, and glorious way. That superhuman persons should appear on earth as men was of frequent occurrence from time immemorial. And it was part of traditional expectation that the Messiah would spring from the Davidic line. Here, then, were all the elements for a doctrine of "descent," resembling the *avatāras* of Indian theology.¹ Just as the future Buddha would leave his home in the Tusita heaven to be born of a woman upon earth, "for the good, the gain, and the welfare of gods and men," so must the Messiah-to-be quit the scene of supernal glory to enter the ranks of humanity and become the deliverer of Israel, as well as the Lord of the heavenly powers. The elements of a Christology were all prepared. There was needed only a personality to which they could be attached.²

II.

Into a world as unlike as possible to that of modern scientific thought Jesus is born. He grows up to manhood in a village home; he receives the education of the Synagogue; he is familiar with the Scriptures of his people; he joins in their worship and shares their devotions. When the voice from the wilderness proclaims that the Kingdom of God has come nigh, he too is moved by the great hope; he takes his place among the crowds on the Jordan bank, where John administers "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." After the imprisonment of the Baptist, Jesus returns to Galilee, with the prophet's message on his lips, "Repent! for the Kingdom of God has come nigh." He begins at once to gather followers round him; he calls Peter and Andrew,

¹ In the Christian portion of the *Ascension of Isaiah* the descent is actually described, x. 7-31; the Lord being instructed, after quitting the sixth heaven, to transform himself into the likeness of the angels of each successively lower region till he comes down to the angels of the air. By this means he passes through the five lower heavens and the atmosphere beneath the firmament without attracting any notice.

² Only one English scholar of the front rank has really grappled with this question. See Professor Cheyne's discussion of the archæological elements of the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, etc., in his *Bible Problems*.

James and John, from their boats, promising to make them "fishers of men"; he enters the synagogue at Capernaum and speaks the arresting word; he passes into the home, stands by the sick-bed—the sufferers gather at sundown in the street before the door—and his career as Teacher and Healer is begun.

He uses, of course, the language of his race, but it is with a new accent and fresh emphasis. He is addressed as Rabbi, but his method is quite different from that of the schools. He speaks with the authority of a prophet; religion is to him no sacred tradition but a living power, and it carries him at once into the heart of human needs, and makes him the helper of all who suffered, who sorrowed, or who sinned. In the intensity of his faith he speaks with an unsurpassed directness and simplicity of God as his Father; but "my Father" is at the same time "your Father" and "our Father," and he bids his followers so feel and act that they may be worthy of this august relationship. He passes to and fro, and enthusiasm follows his steps; crowds fill the house; they follow him upon the hill, they gaze at him in the synagogue, they gather on the lake-side, they watch the movements of his boat; here is a "new teaching," a new life. This is no philosophical moralist, in a gilded palace, unenviably mixed up in court intrigues. Had Seneca¹ sought out the slaves and profligates of Rome, or devoted his vast wealth to the relief of poverty, his lofty teaching might have awakened a wider response, and pointed the way to higher conceptions of social welfare. But it was the great originality of Jesus, as he carried forth the invitation to the kingdom, that he was not "come to call the righteous, but sinners." His critic thinks it strange that he did not denounce the fiscal oppressions of Syria; but the Gospels are no complete records of that *annus mirabilis*, and the condemnation of the rich is sufficiently uncompromising.² In promising the kingdom to the poor, he practically repudiated the whole

¹ Cp. Mr Roberts, HIBBERT JOURNAL, January, p. 369.

² I am obliged for brevity's sake to take the first three Gospels as they stand, and cannot discuss whether the woes in Luke vi. 24–26 are original or are due to the Evangelist's editorial activity.

social order of his day. Did we know more of the language of Jesus in the company of publicans and sinners, we might have more conventional reasons for not wondering that his family suspected his sanity.¹ Many of his ideas carried the seeds of social revolution in them, as we are slowly beginning to find out: but the student of ethics does not expect any teacher to see all the applications of principles which it may take centuries to bring to light. It is enough that Christendom has found in the word and work of Jesus aspirations rather than laws, life more than rule and direction, spirit instead of system,—an ideal of love and trust towards God, of love and service towards man, which have made the cross the permanent symbol of self-sacrifice, and have rendered it possible for his followers through nigh two thousand years, without sense of incongruity, to worship him as divine.

The parables in which Jesus was wont to picture the relations and duties of men to God or of men to one another, such as the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Two Debtors, are of universal significance and perpetual application. But much of his language is cast into the moulds of contemporary thought and expectation, and only appeals to the faith of to-day when it has undergone a process of “translation” even more thorough than that which is begun in the Fourth Gospel. His opening message, “The kingdom of God has come nigh,” shows that whatever other aspects the kingdom might have, it was something that would *arrive*; it would enter the existing order from without, and bring with it vast supernatural change. The close of one age is impending; the commencement of another will set in; the transition will be accomplished in the lifetime of those to whom he speaks, when the “Son of Man” appears and the great judgment inaugurates the Messiah’s rule. Till that time the sovereignty of heaven was disputed; over against the reign of the Father was the reign of the Adversary, whose emissaries swarmed from the abyss to take up their abode in the hapless sufferers from

¹ Mark iii. 21.

madness or disease. It is not necessary to point out that this explanation of nervous and other disorders belongs to the lower culture all round the globe; or that the doctrine of the Sâtân was of late development in Israel's belief, possibly under stimulus from Persian thought. It is enough to observe that Jesus points to his success in overcoming the spirits of evil as proof that the kingdom is in some sense already there.¹ This conviction, among other circumstances, must have profoundly influenced him, and compelled him at last to define to himself his own relation to the great dispensation of which he had been at first, like his predecessor, only the herald. At Cæsarea Philippi the decisive question is asked and answered, "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Messiah." As I read the story, Jesus accepts the title, and formally enters Jerusalem in that character. But, in the choice of types which the Scriptures presented, he felt himself most in sympathy with that of the suffering servant in Isaiah liii.² Again and again, however, he announces the speedy advent of the "Son of Man." Had he really done so when he sent the twelve out to preach?³ Did he expect, as Albert Schweitzer has suggested,⁴ that before the summons to repent could be addressed to the towns of Palestine the crisis would have arrived? and did his disappointment convince him that the only way to secure it was to go to Jerusalem and die? Did he identify himself with the mysterious person who was to descend from the sky? And did that carry with it in his mind the whole hypothesis of pre-existence? At any rate the Church has universally accepted the identification. It is a perilous issue. At the trial he is solemnly asked if he is the Messiah. "I am," he declares; and in burning words he turns the tables on his judges—"And ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." *Then*, the

¹ Matt. xii. 28.

² Identified with the Messiah in the Targum on lii. 13.

³ Matt. x. 23.

⁴ *Das Abendmahl*, 2^{tes} Heft, "Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimniss," 1901, pp. 103-105.

situation will be reversed: he will conduct the world's great assize, and his captors will await their doom before his throne.

But that did not happen.

It may, indeed, be suggested that no reporters were present, and the accuracy of the record cannot be guaranteed. The words may have been attributed to him by the faith of the Church, which looked with such passionate expectation for its Lord's return. But there must have been some foundation for the specific language, for example, of the apostle Paul;¹ and it does not appear possible to evade the belief that the thrice-repeated declarations, at Cæsarea Philippi, on the Mount of Olives, and in the high priest's hall, substantially represent his words, though in none of them does he speak in his own person: he never says, "You will see *me* coming." The suggestion that the prediction was fulfilled at Pentecost is exposed to a double criticism. The descent of the Spirit cannot be regarded as equivalent to the *Parousia* of the Son of Man without a "confusion of the Persons" inadequately explained by the subsequent Pauline equation of the Spirit with the Lord, which introduces such difficulties into the interior relations of the Godhead. And it does not tally with the conditions: for the function of the Son of Man is that of judgment; and for that the Church was still looking in the days of Paul. The failure of this great expectation appears to me wholly inconsistent with the dual nature attributed to the Founder by the Church. No kenotic hypotheses can long overcome the contradiction. An omniscience that can be discharged from the mind, an omnipotence that can be detached from the will, leaving the foresight to blunder and the energy to expend itself in vain ("he could do there no mighty work"), and remaining unowned for thirty years till they were reassumed in heaven, are metaphysically inconceivable. With force enough in his faith and elevation enough in his ideals to inspire the best thought of the world and create the

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15-17.

noblest character ever since, Jesus remains for us a man of his country, race, and time.¹

III.

Much of the teaching of Jesus is inevitably limited by the expectation of the speedy close of the existing scene. The long perspectives of social evolution, politics, and commerce, philosophy, science, art, all lie outside his range. He gives us principles which we may carry with us on our journey; he sets before us a goal, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"; but he provides no detailed chart for the exploration of unknown fields. The Evangelists naturally write from their own point of view, and not from ours; and they tell their story under the preoccupation of the Messiahship. Various titles are assigned to the Teacher in that character which have held a permanent place in Christian devotion. The Early Church, according to the testimony of the Book of Acts, conceived the decisive proof, or rather the constitutive event, to lie in the resurrection and exaltation above the sky, which were originally understood as parts of the same great process. To these Peter appeals on the day of Pentecost to support his declaration that "God hath made him both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 32-36, *cp.* v. 30-31); while Paul affirms at Antioch in Pisidia that the resurrection was the hour when he was begotten as the divine Son (xiii. 33). These titles all have their long history, their various usage. They are associated with conceptions of sovereignty derived from remote antiquity; and they pointed a special contrast with Gentile religions and the cults of imperial Rome.

The author of the second Psalm, one of the later poems prefixed to the Psalter (before the opening of the first collection under the name of David, iii.-xli.), describes the installation of the Messiah in the seat of sovereignty at Jerusalem. Following the ancient court style of the oriental monarchies,

¹ For this reason I prefer to avoid the whole Messianic terminology Christ, the Lord, the Son, etc. See the next section.

reflected in the language of prophecy,¹ he conceives him as the son and earthly representative of the heavenly King, and pictures the Deity looking down in derision on the futile efforts of the assembled potentates to break away from his iron rule. The hour when he mounts the throne in Zion is the hour of his divine generation: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." When the Church sought to determine the moment at which Jesus became the Messianic Son, this text was interpreted, as we have seen, of the resurrection and the consequent elevation to the seat at God's right hand. But another application was also found for it. The human career of Jesus must have borne some traces of his high dignity. He might refrain from asserting it; he might veil it in reserve; but there must have been an hour when he first received the unction of the Spirit and realised his glorious destiny. Such an hour was recognised at the baptism, when the Church sought to delineate the sublime event by a vision of the descent of the dove *into* him,² and a heavenly voice announcing his true character, "Thou art my son, the Beloved." The following aorist marks the moment of selection, equivalent to "on thee hath my choice fallen."³ But the well-known reading of D in Luke iii. 22, "Thou art my son, I this day have begotten thee," which held its ground in the Church to Augustine's time, indicates still more clearly that this was regarded as the season of investiture with the Messiahship, in

¹ "I will be his father, and he shall be my son," 2 Sam. vii. 14. This is quite different from the ethico-religious sonship of Matt. v. 45, *cp.* 9; Rom. viii. 14. The meaning is approached in Pss. Sol. xvii. 30; *cp.* *Abboth.*, iii. 22. Epictetus calls the wise man *υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*, i. 9, 6 (cited by Heinrici, *Die Bergpredigt*, p. 25).

² So all the best modern editors in Mark i. 10. Even in Luke iii. 22, where the dove descends in a bodily form, D reads *εἰς*, and the old Latin *in ipsum*. The *Bath kol* which, according to the Talmudic passage cited by Lightfoot (*Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations*, Matt. iii. 17), "gave witness in Jericho to Hillel that he was worthy to have the Holy Ghost abide upon him," apparently had in view Is. xi. 2.

³ The ultimate reference is probably to Is. xlii. 1. For the tense, *cp.* Bacon, *Journ. Bibl. Lit.*, 1897, p. 138, and 1901, p. 28, and Wellhausen, *in loc.*

which the double character of prophetic servant¹ and future world-king were combined. In this sense Jesus of Nazareth became "Son of God" by an act of adoption.²

Not yet, however, was he, properly speaking, "Lord." The title was derived from Ps. cx. 1 (widely recognised as originally composed in honour of the Asmonean priest-prince Simon, 143–135 B.C.), and was first understood of the risen and exalted Christ (*cp.* Acts ii. 36; Phil. ii. 9–11). It implied sovereignty, which might be expressed in the liberation of Israel—"salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us"—or extended to the imperial rule over the nations in the character of "king of kings and lord of lords" (Rev. xix. 15, 16), or still further widened (with Paul) to a cosmic sway embracing all created beings from the highest heaven to the lowest deep. When Paul, therefore, affirms that while there are gods many and lords many, Christians recognise only one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, he at once draws a distinction between their respective spheres of being, power, and agency, and also separates the exalted Messiah from every other rank of superhuman beings. Not only does the title Lord constantly occur in the religious language of the Greek and oriental cults,³ it was also the title of a special class of angels, the "lordships" (R.V., dominions) of Col. i. 16 and *Secrets of Enoch*, xx. 1.⁴ The Messiah transcended the whole hierarchy of the worlds above,⁵ and all authority was accordingly conferred on him in heaven and on earth. He

¹ *Cp.* Matt. xii. 18; Acts iii. 13, 26, iv. 27, 30, and x. 38.

² A somewhat different meaning attaches to the title "the Son" in Matt. xi. 27. Discussion is here impossible. It must be enough to state that modern students are coming more and more to the conclusion, in view of the textual and other difficulties, that the passage in its present form is due to early theological reflexion. The reason why Paul should have described the Messiah as "the Son," 1 Cor. xv. 28, will be indicated below.

³ Apollo, Asklepios, and so on to Serapis and Zeus, in Roscher's *Lexikon*, s.v. "Kyria und Kyrios."

⁴ The angels are called "lords" in a lost apocalypse of Zephaniah, quoted by Clem. Alex., *Strom.* v. 11, *ad. fin.*

⁵ In an ancient fragment in Rev. xiv. 14–16 he is apparently reckoned among the angels. Against this view the author of Hebrews protests, i. 4–14.

was the head, therefore, of the Christian's commonwealth (Phil. iii. 20), and the prerogatives of empire all belonged in truth to him. In what exalted language these might be described is now well known. On the Rosetta stone, for instance, Ptolemy V., 205 B.C., is designated "the living image of Zeus," "eternal-lived, "God manifest."¹ Julius Cæsar is "God manifest" at Ephesus, and the "common saviour of human life."² Augustus, who is frequently designated "son of God" in Greek inscriptions (carrying a different shade of meaning from the Latin *divi filius*), is "Son of god, Zeus Eleutherios" at Dendyra;³ and at Philæ he is "Zeus out of Father Zeus," and "Star of all Greece, who has arisen as great Saviour Zeus."⁴ Was it surprising that Nero should be "Lord of the whole world, shining as a new sun on the Greeks"? The passionate hostility which these claims excited finds burning expression in the lurid pictures of the fall of Rome in the Apocalypse. The power that should hurl it into the abyss was necessarily presented on a yet mightier scale.

IV.

The reader who passes from the early traditions of the life of Jesus to the letters of the apostle Paul feels himself at once in another atmosphere. A bewildering variety of ideas is suggested to him. Speculations of theology and philosophy, glimpses of the attributes of Deity and hints of various modes of causation, large conceptions of Providence and Creation,

¹ *C. I. Gr.*, 4697, vol. iii. p. 335, lines 3 and 9. As early as 307, a century before, Demetrius and his father Antigonos had been hailed at Athens as "saviour gods." Dr Frazer (*Early History of the Kingship*, p. 138) has translated a contemporary hymn in which Demetrius is addressed as son of Poseidon and Aphrodite. In a note on the Homilies of Aphraates (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, iii. (1888) p. 279), Bert gives some interesting examples from Persian history. Rev. C. J. Ball, commenting on a cuneiform inscription "to the king, the son of his god, be thine ear," observes: "The idea of the king being the son of the god whom he worships is too familiar to need illustration" (*Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, xiv. (1892) p. 156). For the Tel el Amarna tablets cp. Professor Sayce, *Rec. of the Past*, 2nd series, ii. p. 62.

² Wendland, in *Z.N.T.W.*, 1904, p. 342.

³ *C. I. Gr.*, 1715, vol. iii. p. 358.

⁴ Wendland, *ib.*, p. 343.

strange and indistinct forms of Law and Sin and Death half persons and half powers, quasi-magical notions attached to particular material media, are all blended with the impassioned emotion with which the writer contemplates the love which prompted the Father to send forth his Son, and the love which moved the Son to forsake his high estate and give himself for man. In such a world, where every step is open to wide varieties of interpretation, the student must needs walk warily. But the conviction steadily (if slowly) grows that the Pauline Christology cannot be wholly explained by way of inference from the experience of his conversion. Steeped in contemporary eschatology, he must have already had his own conceptions of what the Messiah would be. As soon as he was convinced by the vision near Damascus that the risen Jesus was thus proved to be the Christ, he naturally interpreted his person in the light of ideas already familiar. The path of inquiry in this direction was opened formally by Brückner (1903) and Wrede (1904) in Germany, and Professor Cheyne in his *Bible Problems* (1904) threw many sidelights on its intricacies, though his conjecture that "the apostle Paul, when he says (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4) that Christ died and that he rose again 'according to the Scriptures,' in reality points to a pre-Christian sketch of the life of Christ, partly derived from widely spread non-Jewish myths, and embodied in Jewish writings" (p. 113), may appear too bold. Like the Church at Jerusalem, the apostle saw in the resurrection the proof that Jesus was the "Son of God." But it soon becomes clear that this was no dignity conferred upon him during his earthly life,—it was in some sense the quality of his intrinsic being. It was in virtue of this that he wore the radiant body of the heavenly world—the glory which was the very "form of God."¹ Surrendered on his entry into mortal life, it was resumed when God, after his obedience to death (and not only to death, but to such a death!—"the cross"), highly exalted him to place

¹ Phil. iii. 21, ii. 6; for the change which Christians should undergo cp. *Secrets of Enoch*, xxii. 8-10.

and power above every name. It would seem, however, that the function to which he is thus elevated, that of Lord, implying the sovereignty over the whole of creation, carries with it a rank which he had not possessed before. That is the honour earned by his submission to the Father's purpose. It is, therefore, the supreme term of the Christian confession, which does not consist in declaring that he is Son of God (still less "God the Son"), but in accepting him as Lord (Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3). "One God the Father," and "One Lord Jesus Christ," are thus the earliest terms of the Pauline creed (1 Cor. viii. 6), the first being further defined as the God of the second (Eph. i. 17).

The post-human life of the Messiah was thus of far higher significance for the apostle than his pre-human existence. As the head of the Church, dispenser of gifts and graces, and judge in the great assize which closed in the immediate prospect of the world's history, his relations to man were of more importance than those to nature. Yet these were not instituted for the first time. The future Messiah had fulfilled functions of guidance for Israel (1 Cor. x. 4), attributed by others to Michael, or to the half-personal Wisdom.¹ And earlier still, like that same Wisdom, or like the Son of Man in the Enoch-Similitudes, he had existed before sun and stars; nay, he had been in some sense the instrument of creation (1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16). With Aristotle the apostle regards God as the ultimate fount of existence, the source of all causation;² God likewise is the goal, to which all things tend and in which all shall at last fulfil the purpose of their being; and God also is the constant agent, the perpetual upholder through whom all things arise and are maintained. But within this vast comprehension room is found for the exercise of some kind of delegated power, and the Son who is the "firstborn of all creation," and at the same time the Wisdom and Power of God, becomes a kind of intermediary,

¹ Cp. Eccles. xxiv.; *Wisd. of Sol.*, x.-xii.

² Rom. xi. 36; cp. Ar., *De Mundo*, i. 6, ἐκ θεοῦ τὰ πάντα.

like the Hellenistic Logos, between the Eternal Father and the world we know.

Difficult, indeed, are all these predicates to reconcile. The apostle, however, puts them side by side, apparently unconscious of contradiction. The pre-existent Son is, after all, it would seem, a man, exalted counterpart of Adam,¹ the man "from heaven."² Of the mode of his earthly appearance nothing is said. He was, indeed, born of woman; but he only wore the "likeness of sinful flesh,"³ and of the union of two natures there is no word. It is apparently as Son of Man that he will bring all hostile powers to nought, as the quotation from Ps. viii. in 1 Cor. xv. 27 proves; and the author of Acts, providing Paul with a speech at Athens, does not think he is false to his hero's thought in making him declare that the judgment will be conducted by "the man whom God has ordained."⁴ In view of these (and many other) facts it seems impossible to believe that the apostle should ever have identified the Messiah with "God blessed for ever."⁵

There is, of course, another side to the great argument. In the strange series of headships, woman, man, Christ, God (1 Cor. xi. 3), Christ occupies an intermediary place between the mortals of earth and the Creator. But in relation to the Church he is presented in varying figures—now as the body,

¹ Cp. Luke iii. 38.

² 1 Cor. xv. 47.

³ Rom. viii. 3; the perplexity of this phrase must be passed by.

⁴ Acts xvii. 31.

⁵ Rom. ix. 5. Only a few words are possible on this famous text. Recent critical opinion shows interesting fluctuations. To cite but one or two of the latest; Clemen (*Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung*, 1908, p. 262) unhesitatingly affirms that Paul here calls Jesus God. Professor J. Weiss (*Christus, die Anfänge des Dogmas*, 1909) thinks this the natural meaning of the words as they stand, but suspects corruption of the text (on this head see Preuschen's *Z.N.T.W.*, 1907, p. 319, and 1908, p. 80). Old Testament usage of such benedictions, e.g. in the Psalms, is not decisive, as Paul frequently transfers to Jesus passages connected in the Septuagint with "the Lord." But, as the apostle elsewhere applies *εὐλογητός* only to "the God and Father of the (our) Lord Jesus (Christ)" (2 Cor. i. 3, xi. 31; Eph. i. 3), and to the Creator (Rom. i. 25), I cannot think that in this passage he departs from his usual practice. I agree with Lietzmann, *Hdbch. zum N.T.*, in *loc.*, that it is a matter of feeling; and my feeling, like his, is adverse to the traditional view.

now as the head, and again, with one of the unexpected turns which put all system-builders to nought, he is identified with the Spirit. Language is strained to the uttermost to express the intimacy of the relation. The believer is in Christ, and he is also in the Spirit; but the terms can be inverted, and Christ and the Spirit are each in the believer. This latter phrase is sometimes pressed with startling realism.¹ The exalted conception, with its immense ethical results, of the death of the old man and the resurrection of the new, seems only to be reached by a pathway along which we cannot follow. By sacramental rites, baptism, and the holy food at the supper of the Lord, the spirit-form of Christ actually entered the human frame, communicated the new life, reshaped the "inner man," and began at once the transformation which should be completed hereafter. The "redemption of the body" commenced already through the growth of the Christ within. The sin that had its basis in the flesh was gradually slain (Rom. viii. 13; *cp.* Col. iii. 5), and the believers became "limbs of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15). It was by this process that all distinctions of sex, race, and social status disappeared, and all were one person (εἶς, masculine) in Christ Jesus.

The modern interpreter, nurtured on generations of evangelical experience, can with difficulty think himself back into comprehension of a mind which could harmonise the material and the spiritual by such strange modes. It must not, however, be forgotten that the apostle himself tells us that what was true of the Lord's table was no less true—with a difference—of the tables of the demons. We find it hard, with the stately creations of Greek art before our eyes, to recognise Zeus or Apollo under such an ugly name. But the gods of Greece or Egypt were as real to the early Christians as their own Lord, only their influence was diabolic instead of heavenly. Participation in their food exposed the participant to all the energies which streamed forth from the deity with whom he was thus

¹ Let the reader only consider the earlier Greek ideas enshrined in the word *enthusiasm*, and divers phases of the Orphic religions.

placed in "communion." To the apostle these were only baleful or destructive; but of their power there was no doubt. Strange and uncouth are the stammering utterances of devotion which meet us in such a liturgy as that published by the late Professor Dieterich from a papyrus text.¹ Yet some of its phrases, as the worshipper prays that he may gaze upon the immortal and ascend to the heavenly world, assuredly sound the genuine notes of religion. The mysteries of Isis, who passed on some of her functions to the Virgin Mary, doubtless brought encouragement to many a true-hearted devotee. She was approached as the perpetual preserver of the human race; the stars moved to her command; she was the universal energy of nature; she brought man and wife together; she ordained that parents should be cherished by their children; she made the right stronger than gold or silver; she decreed that the true should be deemed fair, and caused the beautiful and the base to be distinguished.² Here are ethical elements which are not to be despised, or dismissed with opprobrious epithets to the devil. The communion of the believer with Isis does not, of course, stand on the same plane of religious value as the disciple's communion with Christ. The question is not one of elevation, but of reality. The apostle affirms it of both, though the one is divine and the other demonic. The inheritor of the Christian consciousness to-day, to support his conception of the "living Christ," invokes the authority of the apostle in the first case, but rejects it in the second altogether.³

V.

The argument from experience, however, may be carried a step further; and one or two illustrations may be finally presented from a wider field. The long procession of Indian

¹ *Eine Mithras-Liturgie*, 1903.

² See the account of the mysteries of Isis in Apuleius, *Met.*, xi., and the inscription of Ios cited by Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 1908, p. 93.

³ The Johannine Christology develops that of Paul, though with the aid of different intellectual conceptions; it cannot, however, be regarded as true to history, whatever may be its value as expressing a lofty religious idealism.

religions is full of parallels, many of them of the most instructive kind, to different phases of Christian thought and life. Above the religion of legalism, of ritual, of ceremony, of good works, rose the religion of *bhakti*, fervent devotion or love.¹ Its most famous scripture, the "Song of the Lord" (*Bhagavad-Gītā*), has sustained the religious life of hundreds of millions of worshippers through a period probably as long as that covered by Christianity. Here Viṣṇu, incarnated as Kṛiṣṇa, is presented as the teacher of truth, the deliverer from sin, the supporter in difficulty, the giver of peace. The heavenly Lord condescends age after age to be born on earth, for the protection of the good, the destruction of evildoers, and the establishment of righteousness (iv. 8). By knowledge of him they attain likeness of nature with him (xiv. 2); and the way of knowledge is love. "By love he knows me in reality, what and who I am; thereby, knowing me in reality, straightway he enters into me" (xviii. 55). Of this communion it is affirmed that "They that worship me with love dwell in me, and I in them" (ix. 29). Here is the same "mutual inherence" which the New Testament exhibits between the believer and Christ. It produces the same demand for the consecration of the whole being to the heavenly Lord: "Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou sacrificest, whatsoever thou givest, in whatsoever thou mortifiest thyself, do it as an offering to me" (ix. 27). And it rises above all creedal limitations, for "They also who, worshipping other gods, make offerings in faith, make offerings to me" (ix. 22); such are accepted, though they are "not according to the rule." Verily the Kṛiṣṇa consciousness is wider than its Western counterpart.

The complex group of religions embraced under the general name of Buddhism presents no less interesting parallels in the field of religious experience. It is not necessary now to rehearse the similarities to the Gospel story in the earlier legends of the Indian texts. But it is interesting to note the

¹ Cp. the papers of Dr Grierson and Professor Barnett in the *Trans. of the Third Congr. of the History of Religions*, Oxford, 1908, vol. ii. pp. 44-49.

point of departure for the movement of thought which converted the Founder from a human being into an incarnation of the Absolute or Self-Subsistent. The ancient tradition presented him as a man, who passed away at death, leaving no trace behind. The Order which he established sought no communion with him, offered no prayer, looked to him for no guidance. With reverent observance they cherished his memory, they made pilgrimages to the holy scenes, they celebrated the feasts of his birth and death, they dwelt lovingly upon his word and work. But the Buddha was no living dispenser of grace or truth; he had won the supreme deliverance and ceased to be.

The oldest scriptures, however, contain more than one reference to a mysterious expectation analogous to that of the Messiah. The Brahmans, it is affirmed, are awaiting the appearance of Mahā-Purisa,¹ who will manifest himself in one of two forms. Either he will be a universal sovereign, ruling the world in righteousness without need of rod or sword; or, if he adopts the homeless lot, he will be a Blessed Buddha, lifting off from the world the veils of ignorance and sin.² By this conception an escape was provided from the nihilistic issues of Gotama's rejection of all metaphysical ultimates, and a new basis supplied for the interpretation of the Buddha's person. The process can only be traced with difficulty. But already in the third century before our era it was asked whether he was not "transcendent" in the common affairs of life; and, further, whether he had been really born in the world of men, or had only been present in a kind of Docetic phantom. The "transcendentalists," as they were called, did not stop

¹ Sanskrit, *Mahā-Purusha*, commonly translated "Great Man." The history of the conception is obscure; but it is, I think, becoming more and more apparent that it is identical with the Purusha of the earlier Upanishads, the mysterious and elusive term identified with the Universal Self, the highest form of Being, which we should equate in modern terminology with "Spirit." As such he is *īvara*, "God," and *svayambhū* or "Self-Existent."

² *Dialogues of the Buddha*, tr. Professor Rhys Davids, vol. i. p. 111.

³ See the *Kathā-Vatthu*, edited by Mr Arnold C. Taylor for the Pāli Text Society, i. 221, ii. 559-560.

there; and it was not long before the Buddha was identified with the "Self-Existent," and designated *Īcvara*, or "God."¹

By this means the original system of ethical culture was converted into a religion where the devout believer was brought into direct communion with the Infinite and Eternal who had deigned to appear on earth as the Sākya-son, and condescended to seem to be born and die. "Repeatedly am I born," he declares, "in the land of the living, for the duration of my life has no end. So, I am the Father of the world, the Self-born, the Healer, the Protector of all creatures. What reason should I have to manifest myself continually? When men become unbelieving, unwise, ignorant, careless . . . then I consider 'How can I incline them to enlightenment? How can they become partakers of the Buddha-nature?'"² A rich and varied ritual arose to express this new faith. Multitudes of Buddhas and of Buddhas-to-be peopled the universe, which was presented on a scale far nearer to modern ideas than the seven heavens of the Hebrew world. When the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang, captured by pirates as he descended the Ganges, lay bound as a victim on the altar of the dread goddess Durgā, he only asked for a little time, and that they would not crowd around him painfully. Then he seemed to himself to be caught up into the courts of the Tusita heaven where dwelt Maitrēya (Pali, *Metteyya*), the Buddhist impersonation of love, soon to be manifested as the next Buddha on the earth below. Was his prayer, that he might be reborn where he could convert his captors and cause them to give up their evil ways,³ less divine than Paul's ascent to Paradise to hear unspeakable words? The devout worshippers of the lady Kwan-Yin, the Chinese equivalent of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteṣvara, who made the famous vow not to enter final peace till all sentient beings were saved, besought her to come

¹ As such he is *Purushottama* or "Supreme Spirit," *Lotus*, ii. 41, 53; a title of Viṣṇu-Kriṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, viii. 22.

² *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxi, p. 310. In the last clause the term *dharma* is not used in the sense of "law," but of quality, condition, or nature.

³ *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang* (*Yuan Chwang*), tr. Beal, p. 88.

to them and remove the three obstacles of impure thought, speech, and action; and they invoked the historic Buddha and his mighty company in such terms as these: "Would that our own Teacher, Sākya Muni, and our merciful Father Amitābha (the Buddha of Boundless Light), etc., would descend to this sacred precinct and be present with us who now discharge these religious duties."¹ In the tenth century a devout Buddhist, driven from the Ganges valley by Brahmanical persecution, poured out his soul to his lord in a little garland of verse: "Whether I live in heaven or in hell, whether in the city of ghosts or of men, let my mind be fixed on thee; for there is no other happiness for me. Thou art my father, mother, brother, sister; thou art my fast friend in danger, O dear one; thou art my lord, my teacher, who imparts to me knowledge sweet as nectar. Thou art my wealth, my enjoyment, my pleasure, my affluence, my greatness, my reputation, my knowledge, and my life. Thou art my all, O all-knowing Buddha."² The person of Gotama has passed through an exaltation analogous to that of the person of Jesus. The one is apprehended as the living Buddha, the other as the living Christ. The Indian sage is the very God-head himself; the Jewish prophet is indissolubly united with a Person within it. In each case the belief is justified by an appeal to experience. Why is the one to be repudiated, while the other is allowed? What difference can be distinguished in their effects so as to counsel the rejection of the one as illusory, and the reception of the other as divine? History, philosophy, and religion alike demand that the same measure shall be meted out to both. And if so, Jesus of Nazareth will find his place as the loftiest leader among the children of men.

J. E. CARPENTER.

¹ Beal, *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, p. 403. The possible derivation of this liturgy directly or indirectly from Christian sources, in no way impairs its value as a witness to a type of religious experience.

² *Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Feb. 1890, p. 125.

THE CHRISTIAN CULT AS CHRIST- WORSHIP.

JAMES COLLIER.

THE purest and loftiest religions have for the soil in which they grow a state of mind resembling that of all primitive peoples. Dreams and trances, epilepsy and catalepsy, beget visions and breed beliefs in the reality of a spiritual nature in man and of another world. To Mary Magdalene and the Apostle Paul, to Gregory the Great and Isaac Taylor *secundus*, the material body was doubled with a spiritual body, which often deserts the material body in its lifetime, but does not quite forsake it after death. The vision of the crucified Christ, seen by Mary just after Christ's death, furnished assurance of his existence to the minds of his disciples, as such visions have supplied a base for almost all ethnical religions; and it gave shape to all such visions seen by Christians. Another such vision seen or voice heard by Paul was the generating point of the new theology that was to furnish bones and sinews to the new religion. Such visions have nurtured Christianity all through its history. Apparitions of the risen Saviour and of angels are recorded throughout the sacred narrative of the *Acts*. At all crises in its history such visions have come to sustain the struggling faith or guide it in perplexities. They were at first and for long visions of Christ. To St Martin he appeared as a beggar. To King Edward the Confessor, as a radiant child on the altar. To St Francis, as the Crucified, with all his sacred wounds still bleeding. To

Elizabeth of Hungary, as the Man of Sorrows in the person of a leper. To the wild, but cunning and superstitious craftsman Cellini, as a figure on an ivory crucifix. To Bishop Gardiner, as a midnight apparition, the ghost of more primitive seers. The voice of Christ is often heard calling to martyrdom and death. The vision of God, as he has long since become, is the theme of every Nonconformist minister; and when Alexander Maclaren or Henry Allon preaches the sermon, and the pulpit orator is at his best, it is still, as it was to Mary and Paul and Francis, a vision of Christ. The Manchester preacher may take his text from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, but the conception, the sentiment, and the imagery are Christian, not Hebrew. So when the Greek Father sees Deity with the eyes of the soul, or Edward Thring sees God with the eyes of the body informed by the spirit, it is a deified Christ or a Christianised God whom they behold. When one of George MacDonald's saintly maidens has a vision of the Highest, it is in the form of Christ. Nor should we forget the vision—too often the unwholesome vision—of the mediæval nuns who were brides of Christ. Until he is, in the Catholic Church, virtually superseded by the Virgin Mary or by particular saints, it is always Christ who is seen. Visions of these others only confirm the contention. They are of his mother, now denominated Mother of God, and of his followers, who had themselves lived on visions of Christ.

It is found at first, and sometimes even at last, that such visions are to be had near the tomb. The tomb is the generator of churches, as distinguished from religions. It was near the tomb of Jesus that Mary had the vision that founded Christianity. Christ had risen, but every successive generation has visited the tomb, as if to derive holy influences from his haunting spirit. The stream of pilgrimages may at times have slackened; it has never since ceased. In the earlier days of Christianity all who could accomplish the journey went there on pilgrimage. For four centuries crusading hosts fought for

it. A succession of modern travellers has visited it. Many a despairing sceptic, who was eager to believe, like Tissot, Loti, and Bourget, has passed the night by the sacred enclosure.

Tomb-worship was closely connected with the worship of relics. In the mind of primitive man all the parts of a hero's body are charged with potent influence, and they are kept as relics or as amulets. Even the things he handled or that were used against him acquired a semi-sacred quality. Is it not so still? A historic tree is chipped in pieces. Tennyson's home in the Isle of Wight is thus disfigured. So was it pre-eminently with the Founder of the Christian religion. The awful instrument of the Passion has been multiplied indefinitely, and it has in many a spot worked so powerfully on the minds of men as to have almost justified the sacred fraud. The Crown of Thorns, saddest and grandest of all mock-crowns, once hawked about and placed in pawn, was the glory of St Sophia. The lance that pierced his side, discovered or invented at a crisis, changed the fortunes of battle at Antioch in 1048, when it won victory for the army of the Crusaders. The seamless Holy Coat, miraculously preserved, was the palladium of the cathedral at Trier, and in the last century continued to attract millions of pilgrims. But relics of the Redeemer, however multiplied, were still limited; and as he faded away from the minds of Christendom, or retired into an ever-increasing distance, his disciples first, and then *their* disciples and followers, took his place. Over their bones, real or only imagined, churches were raised. The remains of the two great apostles, Peter and Paul, feigned to be discovered by the side of an old Roman highway, were transferred to the mausoleum of Pope Julius the Second, and over them arose the most magnificent fane on earth. No church, indeed, was rightly founded that did not rest on the assumed relic of some saint to whom it was dedicated, and under whose protection it was placed. The sentiment still lives. The Congregationalist ministers who dedicate their chapels to the

Trinity or to Augustine dispense with the relic, but the rite is essentially the same.

The early Christians held their first meetings in private houses, as they have ever since done on occasion and still do in country districts; as soon as their numbers grew large enough they gathered around their graves. The catacombs were their first temples—for secrecy and safety it has been thought, but also because they were there in communion with their beloved dead, and especially with some deceased saint who had spoken fervently to them of the Master. The tomb was year by year enlarged; a mortuary grew up beside it; this expanded into a place of worship, for which the tomb furnished a model; and the church itself was but an enlarged tomb. In freer days, churches were built in memory of the martyrs over their graves and in cemeteries; and Chrysostom used the sepulchres of martyrs for churches.

The savage frequents the tomb in order to carry with him refreshments for the ghost of the deceased. These are at first of the same kind as he had partaken of in life, and they remain such down to quite modern times. European, and among them English, sovereigns were thus served for many days after death; even private individuals, like Poet Congreve by the Duchess of Marlborough, have been thus honoured. Such refreshments grow ever less material as the presence of the ghost of the dead is less vividly realised, and its nature may be conceived to grow more spiritual; one sense alone was left to the old Roman dead, and wine alone was poured into the Roman urns. As the gods were raised from earth to the summit of Olympus, only the steam of sacrifices could ascend to their nostrils. The transition may seem abrupt, but Spencer has shown that there is “an unbroken connection between refreshments placed for the dead and religious offerings at large.” For the ghost is conceived to pass through declining degrees of materiality. To the Christian Fathers, and long after the last of them, the soul of man was still semi-material and escaped from the mouths of the dying, as many an old

engraving witnesses. Gregory the First disputed the truth of the belief that the body raised at the Resurrection would be impalpable, and the great pope has had many descendants, such as Isaac Taylor. So did the double or spiritual body of Jesus Christ, which was so palpable after his resurrection that men could finger it, as Christ himself invited the doubting Thomas to do. With his ascension into heaven even this quasi-material body was withdrawn from sight and touch, but the materiality of his body and his needs, in the belief of the early Christians, is shown by the articles of food they brought to the churches. Not only bread and wine were brought, but honey, milk, strong drink, and birds. After these had been forbidden, ears of corn and grapes were placed on the altar, and other fruits were given to bishops and presbyters, but not offered on the altar. These practices long survived. At the cathedral of Milan in recent times an old man and an old woman brought regularly to the altar a pitcher of water and loaves of bread. The continuity of the sacrificial idea is further shown by the usage at one time general in England and Europe, as late as the tenth century, of providing bread and wine at the expense of the parish, while the custom survived in French abbeys as late as the eighteenth century. Such offerings of the fruits of the earth were called sacrifices by Cyprian and Irenæus, and the use of them slowly disappeared. Cyprian complained of those well-to-do persons "who came into the Lord's house without any sacrifice, and eat part of the sacrifice the poor had offered." The offering of them was, and long remained, a sacrificial act on the part of the congregation in the Church of England, which said: "We offer unto Thee our oblations." In ancient liturgies it is called the "sacrifice" or "victim." In the Anglican service the bread and wine are still "a sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving." The consecrating prayer invokes the Spirit of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, to make the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In the Anglican rite, moreover, the dedication of self, into which the sacrifice eventually

flowered, was introduced into the very heart of the prayer of consecration.

It reveals the modification passing over the ideas of sacrifice that this self-dedication, no longer the dedication of the elements, "was made the turning-point of the whole Liturgy." The Liturgy, in fact, gathered around the sacrifice, which became the generating point of the whole ritual. According to the definition of Durandus, the church is a place where sacrifice is offered to God. The simple rite of the supper partaken of by Jesus Christ and his disciples on a memorable occasion, and now for ever disguised as the Lord's Supper, had become a sacrifice. But it underwent another and more extraordinary transformation. The primitive Christians partook of it as a supper in the evening, when it was named *agapê*, or the feast of love. Secrecy and mystery furnished a handle for ridiculous calumnies. Therefore, or merely by the absorptive power of the sacrificial idea, the evening rite was transferred to the morning and changed into a sacrifice, or naturally assumed the form of one. It continued to be participated in by communicants as a mere commemoration, but other and pagan ideas combined to transmute its character.

Deep in the mind of the primitive man lies the idea that he can acquire the attributes of another by eating his flesh or drinking his blood. Thus the Dacota Indian eats the heart of his slain enemy, and the New Zealander his eyes. Others believe that even the properties of animals can be thus assimilated. Some, like the Abipones, eat the tiger's flesh to gain its strength or its ferocity. Among the Koniagas the whalers who cut the body of the dead whale into pieces are content with drying and preserving them as talismans after they have rubbed the point of the spear with them. Others, again, believe that the dead are honoured by the swallowing of parts of their persons. Many peoples eat their gods, actually or symbolically. Thus the Aztecs made small idols of seeds; the seeds they cemented with the blood of boys who had been sacrificed, and ate them as the body of their gods, or in

memory of them. A long list of the corn and wine gods who are thus eaten and drunk would demonstrate the connection between the Christian and ethnical rites. The aim of the act, in all alike, was, of course, to establish a community of nature between the worshipper and the god.

The purest of religions passes through the same phases as the crudest, and the central rite of Christianity is modelled on that of many ethnical religions. The Founder of Christianity symbolically gives his body to be eaten, but the idea is the same. Christians partake of the nature of Christ, either actually, as the Catholic alleges, or symbolically, as Calvin affirmed, or commemoratively, as most Calvinists now believe. This is the central rite, the generating element, of the whole cult. Christians met to partake of it and repeat the original act; this done, all is virtually done; all else is subsidiary, and derives its importance from its connection with the chief rite. But it must be led up to and led away from. Prayer and praise, confession and sacred readings, are intermingled with it or woven around it, but chiefly to clothe it with solemnity, to prepare for it, to add to its comprehensiveness or its grandeur. It grows with the growth of the religion, the principle of growth residing here. Battles will be fought over it; schisms will take place on it; all will hang on it. It will lie behind schisms and disruptions that take place for other ostensible reasons. Here only it may be observed, that the rite is emphatically a Christ-rite; the Hebrew Deity or the Holy Ghost take no part in it, and are not thought of in connection with it; Jesus is alone the god sacrificed, the god partaken of; and he has at last, in ritual as well as in dogma, definitely become, what he had all along potentially been, the Supreme God. God the Father, who had appeared at intervals, now disappears, and the Holy Ghost, who was to Eastern Europe the spirit of the Father alone, and to Western Europe the spirit of the Father *and* the Son, becomes intermittently, to end in being habitually, *his* spirit or ghost—the Holy Spirit to the increasing multitude of the worshippers of

the Christ-God, in place of the Holy Ghost, as he had been to worshippers of the Jehovah-God.

The transformation of the Lord's Supper into a sacrifice was accompanied by the conversion of the table at first used into an altar. The first stage seems to have been the substitution of a chest which contained the Communion elements, and on the lid of which the Communion was celebrated. Some time in the fourth century, possibly in imitation of Christ's tomb, stone took the place of wood. Then a tomb-shaped structure supplanted the stone table, and in it were placed the relics of a martyr. At last the word altar came to be generally used. The assimilation of the chief instrument of the chief rite of the new Church to the old pagan ritual was complete. Instrumentally, Christ was now served as ethnical deities were served.

The developing doctrine of the Lord's Supper bears testimony to the gradual Christianisation of the rite. It rapidly assumed a sacrificial character, and the word "sacrifice" passed into the ecclesiastical dialect. With the use of the word, an idea that was originally spiritual was materialised and hardened. So early as the second century such high authorities as Justin and Irenæus taught that the body and blood of Christ actually interpenetrated the bread and wine. Next century a step further forward was taken. Cyril of Jerusalem held that, through the working of his body and blood, the communicant became one body and blood with him. All Christians thus enter into the most intimate communion with Christ and acquire a divine nature.

There is still no actual transmutation. It is only that the body and blood of Christ are supernaturally blended with the bread and wine, and partaken therewith. Even Gregory of Nyssa, who approaches the doctrine of trans-substantiation, only maintains that the substances of the bread and wine are still the same, and only a higher element is added to them. Gregory is still crude. "When, through the words of consecration," he writes to Amphilochius, "thou bringest

down the Logos, and in an unbloody manner carvest the body of the Lord, so that the words serve thee for a knife” More spiritual thinkers, like Athanasius, Augustine, and Origen, strove vainly to keep the doctrine on a rational plane. Cyril of Jerusalem asserted that the Supper was a sacrifice. In Augustine the idea of a sacrifice is still spiritual. We ourselves, he maintained, are the sacrifice, and this sacrifice is represented in the sacrament of the Supper. The great developer of Catholic ritual, Pope Gregory the Great, crossed the gulf, and contended that the sacrifice at the Supper repeated the death of Christ. Only one step remained to be taken, and, as we shall see, it was at length taken.

Incidental developments contributed to the exaltation of the sacrament. A supernatural sanctifying influence was upheld by the practice of Infant Communion, surviving in Rome at the end of the fifth century, in the Western Church till the twelfth century, and in Russia to the present day. The view of the Supper as a sacrifice was advanced by the use at its celebration of prayers for the dead, and it was strengthened by the growth of the preachers of the Gospel into an organised and ordained priesthood, which arrogated the sole valid administration of the rite, and ultimately assumed for itself the sole participation in one of the elements.

The self-development of the doctrine in a living church went on irresistibly. The trans-substantiation of the elements was now boldly affirmed. The consecration of the priest, it was asserted, was the agency by which the body and blood of Christ were created out of the bread and wine. Advocates of the more spiritual or the symbolical views protested, and the first great scholastic battle of the Middle Ages was fought over it. Inevitably, the more supernaturalist view prevailed. Trans-substantiation, or the physical transmutation of the elements into the body of Christ, became the faith of the Catholic world. Even the reformer Luther stubbornly upheld the literal sense of the consecrating words. The withholding of the cup heightened the sacrificial character of the

rite. It is now called the Sacrifice of the Mass; Christ is daily sacrificed. But the term Christ has long been disused. Christ has indeed supplanted the First Person of the Trinity throughout the whole history of the dogma, but Christ himself, mainly in consequence of the genesis and development, the ascendancy and preponderance of this rite, has himself become God, and the Supreme God. The term Christ is superseded by the term God. The communicating Catholic is said to "receive God."

The "elevation of the Host" is the solemnest moment of Christian worship. From this point all falls; towards it all rises. It was to observe this supreme rite that the nascent Christian congregations, after they had worshipped in the Temple or the local synagogue, hurried to some appointed private house, where the bread-flesh and the wine-blood were solemnly eaten and drunk.

All other Christian rites and ceremonies had here their origin, and derived from it their principle of development. What was the password and countersign, the necessary token and indispensable condition of admission to that "upper room" where they partook of the Lord's Supper, then to the sepulchral chambers or subterranean chapels where it was secretly administered, and finally to the churches and cathedrals where the rite was openly and gorgeously celebrated? Baptism. Like the earlier rite, it was of Hebrew or pagan origin. Many savage peoples, such as the Australians, have a ceremony called man-making, where a rite equivalent to circumcision is performed. The youth is then admitted a full member of his tribe. The Jews perpetuated and still maintain the rite; and Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin recognised its kinship with baptism. It has been strangely misunderstood. Most anthropologists, including so instructed a sociologist as Professor E. B. Tylor, believe that it has no other significance than one of cleansing. Thirty years ago a profounder thinker threw new light on it. Herbert Spencer convincingly showed that, in a deeper sense than was imagined, it was a

sacrificial rite. Originally, the whole member had been cut off, which of course meant death, and the organs kept as trophies. As peoples grew less savage, or found a better use for prisoners of war than killing them, the mutilation was reduced to a form, and only the foreskin taken. But the idea remained the same. Sacrifice was at the bottom of it, and, as a consequence, dedication to the service of another. The circumcised was spiritually sacrificed and dedicated to Jehovah. This remarkable theory furnishes a key to the rite of baptism. Sacrifice and dedication remained the principle of it. Early and late evidence conspire to prove its character. "Ye are baptised," writes the author of the Epistle to the Romans, "into his death." Namely, you are dedicated to him, if need be, to the extent of sacrificing your lives for him. The Christian character of the rite is no less apparent. Even John the Precursor baptised in the name of Jesus; and were the statement an error, it would only prove that the new rite was so absorptive as to swallow up previous observances of another type. Christ's apostles naturally baptised in his name, never in the name of God. So did many a subsequent generation. Not till Christ had virtually disappeared in the Godhead was the apostolic formula superseded, as it now is, by a formula implicating the entire Trinity—that is, the deified Christ—in the act. Down to late times, indeed, the rite was described in a primitive manner. Count Maurice of Saxony was in baptism "incorporated with the Lord Jesus," made one with his body. It was the language of an earlier age. An early Father said that in baptism, as in the Eucharist, the Christian "put on Christ." Consecration to the service of Christ, mystically thus expressed by language implying a complete identification with him, was the inner meaning of the ceremony. The substitution of the term "christening" for baptism marks the Christianisation of the rite.

At first performed on those who, in mature years, were converted to a new religion, only adults were baptised, and a large religious denomination has been founded on this

distinctive practice. But as whole families thus passed under a new flag, the rite was necessarily performed over the very young, and in time it was extended to infants. The idea of it, while apparently losing significance, acquires a fuller significance. Every child in a Christian household is now dedicated to Christ from infancy, and, having been thus consecrated, it does not need to be consecrated afresh when it has reached maturity. It has chosen its side, or its side has been chosen for it. That side being what it is, the rite implies nothing less than a moral transformation. If it did not actually amount to personal regeneration, it produced baptismal regeneration. It wiped out the sin inherited from Adam. It washed out that hereditary culpability which inhered in the individual as a member of the human race. All this is accomplished by baptism in the name of Christ, who is the head and front of the ceremony, as of the Eucharist; and in whose honour it has come to be named christening—Christ-making. The more advanced thinkers held views still more thoroughgoing. According to Chrysostom, it initiated sonship and brotherhood in Christ. According to Isidore of Pelusium, it imparted regeneration and communion with Christ. The mystic Theodore of Mopsuestia heightened the later Greek view. He regarded the rite as communicating a participation in the sinlessness of Christ. From whatever point of view we look at it, we perceive the indissolubleness of its connection with Christ. How deeply it penetrated into life we may infer from further developments of the doctrine. The idea that unbaptised children are damned was held by many of the early Fathers, as it is held at this day by the Catholic Church, which it leads into strange practices and reckless surgical operations. In all forms and conditions of it, its relation to Jesus Christ is the essential part of it.

A supplementary rite, early introduced, is that of Confirmation. It was a necessary consequence of the introduction of infant baptism, and completed the transformation that it had begun. It has ethnical analogues, and it was still so far

material in its character that in the Greek Church it was accompanied by anointing with oil. A magical operation of the oil, as of the water in baptism, was assumed. The relation to Christ is still obvious. The sacrifice or the dedication of the individual is now confirmed.

The catechumen is now a communicant, and he is qualified to enter into that full communion with Jesus Christ which the Eucharist symbolises or procures. Not at once is the satisfaction gained. He is admitted to the sacred place, but the miracle must first be solicited. The ways must be opened, the mind of the communicant attuned, and, above all, the Deity made propitious. What was the first element in the mingled service? Possibly that which is now known among Christians as "praise." It is one of the oldest features of ancestor-worship. It is first a part of the funeral rites. It is repeated each time the refreshments are brought to the grave, and it may be defined as the spiritual counterpart of the more material elements. The appetite for praise is as strong as that for food. "Alfred Tennyson is an honest soul," said Carlyle, one afternoon, "who does not seek for adoration, but when it comes he's quite content." The craving for that which all desire in life is insatiable in death. Praise is lavished on the deceased unstintedly. His good or great qualities are eulogised. His exploits are narrated. Should he have been but a common soul, hardly rising above the crowd, these eulogies, like the refreshments accompanying them, are continued only for a little space and then disused. Should he have been a chief or a hero, they are periodically repeated. Should he have been the founder of a religion, or should he have conquered a primacy over other spirits through the success or the multiplication of his votaries, they may become permanent. Eulogies of the dead then pass into a service of thanksgiving and become praises of a deity. His mighty deeds are recited; his aid is invoked; benefits are sought at his hands, and the turning away of evils.

How close is the parallelism between such eulogies and the laudations of a deity will appear on recalling the Vedic hymns

addressed to Indra. "The heroic Indra, who delights in praise," and to whom the hymn is "chanted at the sacrifice," the worshippers thus hoping to impel him to succour them, is the type of all such ; and the Vedas abound in such laudations. The practice is no less visible in the Hebrew ritual. The Book of Psalms is a mingled volume of threnodies and eulogies. In no literature, perhaps, is the Deity more frequently or more fulsomely celebrated. They, too, were sung when sacrifices were made or offerings brought.

With the passage of Jehovah-worship into Christ-worship, the object of the praises was changed and their character was altered, but the rite remained substantially the same. The psalms in use in the synagogue were adopted, and other canticles taken from the Scriptures were sung ; and they continue to be chanted, as in the Church of England, or sung, as in the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, to this day. But they are chanted or sung to the Father of Jesus Christ or to Christ himself. With the growing ascendancy of the new faith, new forms of praise were required. The earliest recorded Christian hymnody was described by the elder Pliny as being a song (*carmen*) sung to the Christ-God (*Christo quasi deo*), and he speaks of it as being sung at daybreak. As the love-feast was partaken of at night for secrecy, and may have been prolonged to morning, it may well have been connected with the *agapé*. The Christians sang, it is said, "to the Lord." These sacred songs resembled the grave-chants over private individuals in being often extempore. A Christian archæologist states that it was usual at that time for any persons to compose divine songs in honour of Christ, and rise to sing them during public worship. These, Tertullian informs us, were sung after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Later in the same (third) century, we know from the proceedings taken against Paul, bishop of Samosata, that many psalms and hymns were sung setting forth the praises of Christ, and it was characteristic of the pre-Arian prelate that he forbade these to be sung in his diocese ; unless it was that he only anticipated the decision of

the Council of Laodicea, forbidding private individuals to sing hymns during divine service. Another early hymn to Christ—perhaps the earliest known after the one mentioned by Pliny—was that by Clement of Alexandria, and it represents the Gnostic vein in the religious praise of the primitive Church. A third source—the Græco-Roman—is derived from the popular music of the day. The hymns were sung to popular airs, as Burns set his songs to such, and Mr Sankey sang his hymns.

As the bird originally sings only at the season of pairing, and with the object (or at least with the result) of attracting the female, but learns to sing at other seasons and for pure delight in it, the Christians learnt to sing the songs of the new Zion at other times than at the Communion-service. Ecclesiastical story tells how Ambrose kept his flock awake and in heart on a memorable occasion by composing, to be then sung, a series of hymns, of which some at least in terms, and probably all in spirit, were addressed to Christ. A hymn of Pope Gregory the First invokes “King Christ, Maker of all things”; and as his name is identified with the Gregorian chant and the organisation of the Mass, we may conclude that Christ was the soul of the musical portion of the Mass. The solemnest hymn of the Middle Ages—the awe-inspiring mediæval dirge, sublimely translated by Walter Scott—was addressed to the “King of awful majesty.” All hymns, indeed, were variants on this theme. It was the praise of the Christ-God that supplied their substance and animated their spirit.

The purely Christian element in sacred song gathered force, and its Christian complexion grew more conspicuous. The Hebrew element fell into the background, or else it too was Christianised. Of course it assumed the aspect of the religion of those dark times, and reflected the character of Christ as he was then conceived. The *Rex tremendæ majestatis* was no other than the elder brother of Bethany, or the preacher of the Galilean lake, transformed beyond recognition.

When the Reformation of the sixteenth century changed the faith of a great part of the Christian world, the course

its praise took connoted its theology and registered its Christ-like character. How entirely the Lutheran Reformation was a turning back to the worship of the true Christ, from the worship of the Virgin Mary or of a false Christ, is shown by the grand chorals to which it gave birth. The chief theme of all or most of these is the Crucified God. Luther's *unser Gott* is the Christ-God; and the *Lyra Germanica*, like Luther himself, knows no other God.

It is somewhat otherwise with Calvin and his followers, Clement Marot excepted. The Old Testament complexion (reprobated in terms, though it was, by Calvin himself) is manifest in their psalmody. Zwingli had abolished sacred singing by the congregation, and the earliest French Protestants sang no hymns. On the other hand, the first Genevese reformer, Farel, printed a volume of sacred songs, though it is not stated that any use was made of them in public worship. Farel must have urged the new departure upon Calvin, who seems to have been nothing loth, and the two reformers expressed in the Articles of 1537 the belief that Christian praise should not be limited to the words of Scripture. In Strasburg and in Geneva, Calvin introduced the singing of versified psalms, of the versified Ten Commandments, and other compositions. Of these, two are notable. One was the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon, and the other a free hymn (namely, not restricted to biblical words) of "salutation to Christ." In Scottish Presbyterian churches it was the versified Psalter that was adopted, and long remained, as supplying the sole words of this portion of the service in Calvinistic churches. Four hymns were added to the doggerel—one by Joseph Addison; and not till well on in the nineteenth century were other uninspired words of praise introduced into the Scottish Presbyterian churches. The "Auld Lights" held out longest, but the "New Lights," standing for a more liberal theology—in fact, worshippers of the Christ-God, in contradistinction to the Jehovah-worshippers of the Kirk and the old Free Church—early introduced the use of hymns. In

England, the Christ-worshipping Nonconformists of many denominations have long had each their hymn-books, and the Church of England has followed in their footsteps. These hymns reveal the development and expansion of Christ-worship by their enormous enlargement, especially in recent years. If, as has been said, every hymn of the early Christian days added glory to Christ, the Christ-God is assuredly triumphing in sacred song.

Prayers were habitually made to the dead along with praises. Their aid was invoked against enemies and calamities; benefits were sought, in return for offerings, laudations, and worship. Out of these insensibly emerged prayers to the deities. The Christian prayers were at first Jewish, and were addressed to the Father, but always, from the time of Paul onwards, in Christ's name. Yet some were addressed directly to Christ. Origen, for example, prays to the Lord Jesus or to the Word; there are many such prayers in his discourses. The monk Nilus wrote: "We conquer . . . especially by calling on the name of Jesus Christ, the God who loves mankind, and our Saviour." "I will pray to Christ," says Jerome, "for aid against the wrongdoer." "Let us all flee to Christ," preached Augustine, "and pray to God," etc., where "God" evidently means Christ. Chrysostom, in one of his homilies, asserts that God answers prayer, as he (Christ) answered the prayer of the Canaanitish woman.

Chrysostom and Ambrose furnish examples of such Christ-addressed prayers. Clement of Rome winds up prayers that are ostensibly addressed to God with a benediction especially addressed to Christ. This is peculiarly the case in the Litany, which was, says Dean Stanley, "a popular supplication sung or chanted by wild, excited multitudes under the pressure of calamities" in the fifth century, the fifteenth, and whenever danger threatened or grief was overwhelming. Then it appeared *who* was the real Deity. In it believers pray to be delivered from the wrath of Christ: they entreat the goodness and forgiveness of Christ: they look for the revelation of the

mind and purpose of God through the knowledge of the mind and purpose of Christ. The invocations in the most devotional work Christianity has produced, if of a monkish devotion, are obviously addressed to the Christ-God. We may obscurely, but not dubiously, trace the rise of the practice. The traditional prayers, inherited by Christianity from Judaism, were addressed to God, but the special prayer, most characteristic of the Christians and most Christian, known as the prayer of consecration, preceded the breaking of bread in the Eucharist, was the root of the new devotion, and coloured all. Compare the accents of ancient devotion with those of the early Christians, and the difference will be seen to be profound. The prayer of consecration was in those early days presumably addressed to Christ; and henceforth it is the Redeemer, the Saviour, who is invoked. If he is not always addressed by name, it is because he is transformed into the Supreme Deity. But even now, in moments of strong feeling, it is Christ who is invoked, equally by Catholics and Protestants. "Come, Lord Jesus," was the exordium of a prayer by Dr Lyman Beecher. "What shall I render to thee, Jesus, my Lord, for all thy benefits?" cried the missionary martyr, Brebeuf. "And I," prayed Beza, "O Christ, full of benignity, what fruits have I returned to Thee in the seventy-six years that I have lived until now?" An old priest, in a romance by Fogazzaro, advises a sinner struggling with temptation to throw himself into the arms of Jesus, to tell his desires to Jesus, to question him, and listen to him. The only God implied in his ghostly counsels is Christ.

The transition from the new to the old Deity was facilitated by the use of the term "Lord." Such a term could be applied to Jehovah, who was the Lord of Hosts, as it had been currently applied to him under the older dispensation; but it was often applied to Jesus Christ, whom the disciples habitually spoke of as "the Lord," and who is now habitually spoken of as "our Lord." In the mouths of Christians so unlike in every attribute as Athanasius, Swedenborg, and George

MacDonald, the term "the Lord" means Christ, and he is their only Deity. For some time after he had "ascended into heaven," Jesus was felt to be in the midst of his disciples and of every assembly that gathered together in his name. They offered a prayer in the name of Jesus before every act, and asked his blessing on all meals. As time ran on and the first disciples died, the ghostly presence of the Saviour grew more and more remote, but it was to the same personality that all petitions were really addressed.

When a notable person is buried, his sayings are often recalled at the graveside or on the walk back from the cemetery. His example is cited, and now his biography is invariably written. Everything connected with him has been clothed with a new sanction. His precepts become unwritten laws. So it was amongst the American Indians, where the recital of their ancient laws was "a prominent part of the mourning for deceased sachems." The Holy Communion was but the continuation of mourning for Jesus; and then the almost dying words of the doomed Redeemer were recalled, as they are read on such occasions to this day.

At first, we may believe, no uninspired words were allowed to mingle with the sacred accents of the Saviour. Only when to these were added the exhortations conveyed in letters from the inspired founders of the churches or the personal disciples of Jesus, perhaps, were extraneous additions permitted. Then some convert who was bolder than the others would venture on a deferential, but illuminating, comment, just as we still observe an original preacher interpolate an instructive remark during his reading of the Scriptures. Out of this, we may imagine, came the homely talk, exhorting the congregation to imitate the words that had been read. At this day the Russian pope, after celebrating the Communion, often contents himself with addressing a few such words to the congregation.

The homily grew into the expository sermon, of which class the so-called homilies of John Chrysostom are unsurpassed masterpieces. The sermons of Augustine were still

largely expository. So, when Christianity turned back to its source, were the sermons of Luther, Calvin, and Beza. The type survives, or until lately survived, in the expository "lectures" delivered on Sabbath morning by Scottish Presbyterian ministers. Out of these homilies, again, sprang the theological lectures of the Reformers. Calvin is considered the founder of modern systematic theology, but his Genevan lectures were mainly expository.

How Christian these earlier and later preachings were in form, as in spirit, appears from the fact that the first semi-inspired preachers, his disciples, spoke in Christ's name. They preached Jesus; they testified that he was the Son of God. Paul preached "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (no longer of Jesus); he preached "Christ and him crucified." So does the emancipated Congregationalist minister of our own day, who has drunk deep of the spirit of Rothe, declare at the outset of his ministry that he, too, preaches only Christ and him crucified, while he really intends to preach the very different Christ whom nineteen centuries of Christian civilisation have made of the Nazarene. In New York and Boston the advanced liberal minister announces an ethical theme as the subject of his discourse, and he treats it in an unconventional manner; but his real topic, under all disguises, is still the Christ-life.

Christ breathed upon his apostles, inspiring them, or giving them power of preaching with effect. On the day of Pentecost tongues of flame hovered among the audience, and communicated to the speakers a faculty of passionate persuasion that made them intelligible to people who did not speak their tongue. So were both Peter and Paul "filled with the Holy Ghost" when they addressed Jewish or Gentile crowds in the name of Jesus. Christ bequeathed his spirit, which in due time was personalised and became his Spirit, and finally was made a distinct person of the Trinity as the Holy Ghost. It was still Christ's spirit that inspired his apostles and followers. "All that a confessing bishop says," claims Cyprian, "he says by inspiration of God." "The Lord," he

adds—and the term is evidently the synonym of “God”—“dwells in us and speaks at that supreme hour.”

As each part of the ritual was developed, the ritual as a whole was organised. Prayer and praise, confession of faith and confession of sins, reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of a sermon, led up to, circled round, or led away from the central and supreme rite of Communion or sacrifice, for which the whole was instituted, and out of which it had grown. Gibbon summarises the marvellous evolution when he relates that while “the Lord’s prayer consists of half a dozen lines, the Sacramentarius and Antiphonarius of Gregory fill 880 folio pages; yet these constitute only a part of the *Ordo Romanus*,” which lasted for over three hours. And all this wonderful expansion, admirable or portentous as we view it, but interwoven and compacted into an organic whole, had for its generating point the simple supper in that upper chamber at Jerusalem. That is to say, the whole structure of Christian worship, complicated as that of the Roman high Mass, or simple as the service of the most primitive Methodist sect, has for its reason of existence the sacrifice of Christ. The Hebrew Deity has no place here. The Christ-God is its germinal protoplasm, its causal nexus, its beginning, middle, and end.

The Christ-like character of Christian worship would not less visibly appear did we follow the course of certain ceremonies at particular festivals. All of them were, yet more than they are, dramatic renderings of the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The Catholic Church, and still more the Greek Church, still mimic the manger at Bethlehem; they repeat the drama of Calvary; they are grief-stricken on Good Friday; they wait overnight on Easter Sunday for Resurrection morning.

Christ claims all as his. He will have our whole being—our soul, heart, mind and strength, as the Catechism proclaims with deliberate emphasis. Hence Baptism, which consecrates the individual to his service; hence Confirmation, which drives home the obligation at maturity; and hence the Lord’s Supper,

which identifies the worshipper with the Deity. Other sacraments retain, heal, specially set apart, or generally consecrate, and finally prepare for eternal reunion. It is the God-man who is at first sacrificed; it is the worshipper, middle and last, who is sacrificed to the new Deity. Hence the prodigies of devotion and sacrifice that fill the annals of Christianity. Each sacrament, though most of them have their roots in ethnical observances, is adopted by Christianity and stamped with its seal; Christ, his nature and personality, are woven into its substance, transforming the old rite into one altogether new. Not only all sacraments, but all ceremonies—prayer and praise, sacred reading and preaching—however they may belong by their form to universal religion, imbibe their spirit and derive their complexion from a single source. It is the worship of Christ that gives them all alike their peculiar significance. The old names may be used. Jehovah may be invoked; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be lauded and hymned; the ancient Hebrew Scriptures may still be “the marrow of divinity”; their narratives and their apophthegms, their laments and exultations, their prophecies and visions may weave the warp of the new faith. None the less, it is the adoration of the risen Lord that is the true object of religious worship and the chief nourishment of the believer. On this foundation rests the individual life, and on this rock the Church is built, quite as much in the estimation of the simple Christian and the least traditional sects as according to the theory of the most highly organised churches.

JAMES COLLIER.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

JESUS OR CHRIST?

AN APPEAL FOR CONSISTENCY.¹

THE REV. R. ROBERTS.

RECENT criticism of the New Testament has gathered around Jesus Christ and the testimony of its various documents to His person and work. This has characterised not merely the churches technically called Evangelical, but has also marked large sections of the Roman obedience on the extreme right and influential scholars in the Unitarian church on the extreme left. For the scholarly divines and the devotional lay minds who have felt the force of this great current of Western thought in the sphere of religion, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Jesus Christ is Christianity. The several parts of the New Testament are in the main narratives of His supposed life and teaching, or theories of various kinds built upon them. But neither the narratives nor the theories are Jesus Christ.

With certain reservations, it may be said that the group of doctrines known as "Evangelicalism" is the common property of Western Christendom. In developing its thought "back to Christ," Evangelicalism has found itself driven to make stupendous claims on behalf of Jesus. It is not possible, within the compass of this article, to set forth those claims with any approach to fulness, nor to state fully the numerous and grave misgivings which they create for the modern mind. But on the threshold of even such treatment as is here possible one finds himself beset by an initial difficulty. Perhaps I can best express that difficulty in the form of the following questions:—Are the claims to be presently set forth made on behalf of a spiritual "Ideal" to which we may provisionally apply the word "Christ," or are they predicated of Jesus? The apologists do not frankly face these questions. The reluctance to do so renders it difficult to make any pertinent criticism of the claims. For it may easily turn out that insistence on limitations of knowledge, restrictions of outlook, evasions of issues, and disillusionments of experience true enough of an historic Jesus may not be wholly relevant to a spiritual "Christ Ideal" expanding and enriching through the ages into "the Christ that is to be." To one who was the "fulness of Godhead" bodily expressed, "Very God of Very God," they could not be attributed

¹ A few *errata* in the original article are corrected in the reprint.—EDITOR.

at all, without such a strain as would crack the sinews of language, reducing the sequences of speech to incoherences of thought.

The vast sweep of these claims becomes apparent in the following citations from writers who have laid the Christian world under a heavy obligation by their elevation of thought and spirit, the chastened scholarship, the fine yet reasoned reverence of their work. I select first a somewhat abstract statement of the "Modernist" position in the Roman communion:—

"The whole doctrine of Christ's *κενῶσις*, or self-emptying, can be explained in a minimising way almost fatal to devotion, and calculated to rob the Incarnation of all its helpfulness by leaving the ordinary mind with something perilously near the phantasmal Christ of the Docetans. Christ, we are truly taught to believe, laid aside by a free act all those prerogatives which were His birthright as the God-man, that He might not be better off than we who have to win our share in that glory through humiliation and suffering, that He might be a High Priest touched with a feeling for our infirmities, tempted as we in all points, sin only excepted" (*Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 98, the Rev. George Tyrrell).

The learned Catholic scholar above cited has his own quarrel with the terms of this statement. But his uneasiness as to its phrasing does not touch the purpose for which it is here quoted, the point of which is to show that Jesus and Christ are terms used interchangeably; that the "self-emptying" of the God-man has no meaning apart from a historic life conditioned by the limitations of ordinary humanity; and that He, in His humiliation, felt the poignancy of all such temptations as assault our frail nature, sin only excepted.

Coming now to the Anglican Church, the opinion of the late revered Bishop Westcott will be accepted as representative of a large school of thought within and without his own communion. On the significance of Jesus for the Christian life and doctrine he says:—

"We look back indeed for a moment upon the long line of witnesses whose works, on which we have entered, attest the efficacy of His unfailing Presence, but then we look away from all else (*ἀπορῶντες*) to Jesus the leader and perfecter of faith, who in His humanity met every temptation which can assail us and crowned with sovereign victory the force which He offers for our support" (*Christus Consummator*, p. 156).

And still more pointedly in the same volume:—

"The Gospel of Christ Incarnate, the Gospel of the Holy Trinity in the terms of human life, which we have to announce covers every imaginable fact of life to the end of time, and is new now as it has been new in all the past, new in its power and new in its meaning, while the world lasts" (*Christus Consummator*, p. 171).

Passing now to those churches known as Nonconformist, Principal Fairbairn, writing of the "historical Christ," says:—

"The Person that literature felt to be its loftiest ideal, philosophy conceived as its highest personality, criticism as its supreme problem, theology as its fundamental datum, religion as its cardinal necessity" (*Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 294).

Twelve years of building construction separate the work containing this sentence from the next quotation to be cited. I select a somewhat more detailed paragraph from *The Ascent through Christ*, by the Rev. Principal E. Griffith Jones. On the last page of this very interesting volume we find the following passage:—

“We do our Master little honour when we place Him among a group of teachers competing for the acceptance of men. He is not one of many founders of religions. He is the source and fountain of all, in so far as they have caught a prophetic glimpse of His truth, and anticipated something of His spirit, and given a scattered hint here and there of His secret. He is the truth, the type, the saving grace, of which they faintly and vaguely dreamed; the Desire of all Nations, the Crown and Essence of Humanity, the Saviour of the World, who by the loftiness of His teaching, the beauty of His character, the sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice, is able to save to the uttermost all who will come to Him and trust in Him” (*The Ascent through Christ*).

The final quotation to be made will represent a scholarly and conservative school of Unitarian thought. The Rev. Dr James Drummond was selected to deliver the last of the well-known series of Hibbert Lectures, and from it I take the following passage:—

“The Word made flesh discloses to us, not some particular truth or requirement, but the very spirit and character of God, so far as we are able to apprehend it; for the Divine Thought is God Himself passing into self-manifestation, just as our speech is our own personality entering into communication with others” (Hibbert Lectures, *Via, Veritas, Vita*, p. 312).

“Word” and “Thought” are both implied in the Greek “Logos.” On the Evangelical theory, the “flesh” was Jesus, not Christ. If I understand Dr Drummond’s position aright, whether it was as “Divine Word” or as “Divine Thought” it was still “God Himself” who dwelt in the fleshly tabernacle known as Jesus. But on both theories there is a localisation of the Infinite, a differentiated moment in eternity, a limitation within the conditions of a fleeting human organism of the Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Perfect God. If Jesus was the “Word made flesh,” and if this same “Word”—or, to meet Dr Drummond’s position, “Thought”—was “God Himself,” then it would seem difficult to resist the inference that Jesus was God. Such a position involves all the claims which the quotations now cited have made on behalf of Jesus. Dr Drummond does not indeed draw out the implications of the position with the startling vividness which we find in Principals Fairbairn and Jones. The great Unitarian scholar is mainly concerned with the ethical and spiritual content. It is within the sphere of morals he is anxious to affirm the peerless position of the “Word made flesh,” and it is notable that nearly throughout the lecture the position thus claimed is associated with Christ. Jesus, as distinct from Christ, makes but an occasional appearance in the lecture-room of this “Hibbert” lecturer. Yet it cannot but be that His presence is felt in every phase of the lecture, for it is only in and through “the flesh” that the Word becomes the subject of history and enters into relationship with men. When we remember the very rich content of the

Greek "Logos," and that "the Divine Thought is God Himself," it seems impossible to limit His presence and potency within the sphere with which the lecturer is dealing. God is not to be so confined. No part of the universe is without Him, and thus it appears to me that the two distinguished Congregational scholars have but drawn out to their logical conclusions ideas implicit in Dr Drummond's Unitarian position. The claims thus made on behalf of Jesus are what I have ventured to describe them, "stupendous." When their character, scope, and magnitude are considered in the light of New Testament documents and in that of the secular literature nearest to New Testament times, a disturbing sense of disproportion between the claims made and the historical evidence legitimately producible in support of them grows upon the mind.

In dealing with the evidence which is submitted, it cannot be overlooked that statements made as to Jesus cannot properly be admitted as evidence for Christ. Dr Percy Gardner, as will be presently shown, has observed the distinction here made. But in the current literature, in the hymnology, and in almost all sermons the rule is to take statements as to Jesus and apply them to Christ. A remarkable example of this is found in Dr Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, where (p. 353) passages relating to Jesus in the footnote are adduced in the text as evidence for Christ. The illegitimacy of this process becomes apparent when the differing character of the two words is borne in mind, and when the historic process of the passage of Jesus into Christ becomes more clearly understood. This is one of the many reasons why increasing numbers of people find their confidence in the very bases of the Evangelical faith most seriously disturbed.

The silence of non-Christian literature as to Jesus has more significance than is usually assigned to it. The point, however, cannot be developed here.

When we turn to the New Testament, we have a body of literature whose evidential value has been, and still is, the riddle of Christendom. Close and careful reading of its documents reduces our knowledge of the actual facts of the life of Jesus to a small, and, it must be added, a narrowing compass. Beyond the narrative of birth and infancy and one incident in the boyhood, the Synoptists give us only detached fragments of events in one year of His life. The Johannine narrative extends the chronology so as to cover portions of perhaps the last three years. Criticism, of course, greatly reduces the value of this face view of the story. Following it, we pass along narrowing areas of admissible statement, through the textual territory marked by Dr Schmiedel's "pillar" passages, till we reach the position of Kalthoff, from which the figure of the historic Jesus has completely vanished.¹

So far, I have dealt only with the alleged events of the life. With the exceptions named, they seem to have disappeared from Apostolic literature. To Apostolic literature the Jesus of the Gospels, apart from the incidents

¹ Amended sentence.—EDITOR.

mentioned, is unknown. But the case as to the alleged teaching is still more disturbing. On the modern Evangelical theory, this teaching is the whole groundwork of Christian theology and institutions. Moreover, in the contentions¹ which, it is said, distressed the early churches, the teaching, if it then existed as we have it, would have been the first thing to be produced, and in nearly the whole of the Pauline disputations its production would have been decisive. Yet the fact is that, with one exception, we have no single statement of the teaching produced in Jesus' own words. That alleged exception is the Eucharistic formula in Corinthians. Considering the immense stress laid by modern theological criticism on the authority of Jesus in the sphere of morals and religion, the fact that the Christian documents chronologically nearest to His times do not consider it worth while to quote His words is not a little disconcerting. I do not wish to forget the limitations attaching to arguments from silence. But I may remark that they are more strictly applicable to ordinary literature, written under the normal conditions of humanity and for the common purposes of literature and life. This, however, is not the case with New Testament literature. It purports, so it is affirmed, to be an exposition of the life, work, and teaching of One who came to reveal the Father, to give the world assurance of new truth, and to lay upon mankind the authority of a new, universal, and eternally binding moral code. These claims may or may not have lain latent in the "sayings" on which they are said to be based, and it may be also that the historic Christology of Christendom is but their formal expression. Be that as it may, they are part of the literary output of the times and countries which produced them, and alike in their noblest passages and in their legendary parts they carry the impress of their "place of origin."

They are in harmony with the intellectual climate of that part and age of the world. An instructed Jew would be familiar with the thought in almost every passage attributed to Jesus. A cultivated Roman versed in the literature of the Græco-Roman world would find no difficulty in narratives of blind men restored to sight, of lame men regaining the use of their limbs, of divine heroes born of a virgin mother, and of dead men restored to life. These were some of the normal products of that mental climate. But the New Testament marvels have outlived that climate, and, like an Alpine plant occasionally found on Yorkshire moors, they live on in new and strange surroundings. But they did not and they could not awaken the many-sided reflections in apostolic, patristic, or scholastic times they inevitably do to-day; and statements which passed comparatively unchallenged in pre-evolution days find themselves now in an atmosphere quick with eager questionings. In the larger, wider intellectual world of to-day these mementos of man's mental past startle

¹ Paul contended for the freedom of the spirit against the bondage of the letter. The teaching on the Sabbath attributed to Jesus, especially the text, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," would have been decisive.

the reader. If he is presented with a narrative of the life and teaching of One "in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily," he rightly asks for credentials which would never have occurred to a Paul or a Plutarch. And yet of that One who came to be the inexhaustible and final revelation of the infinite God—nay, who was Himself "Very God of Very God"—we have only these meagre, these elusive and tantalising reports. This is enough, I submit, to justify the serious disquietude of the modern mind on this part of the New Testament problem.

There are, however, other aspects of the same problem which the widened horizons of the modern world compel us to recognise. Possession by evil spirits was a form of belief natural to the culture-level at which the Jews of Jesus' day stood. They believed that these evil spirits entered into the human organism, and that their presence was the cause of physical and mental derangements. Jesus seems to have shared these opinions. Even more embarrassing to the modern mind is His apparent acquiescence in the popular belief that they could be expelled by exorcism, and that He Himself practised the art so effectually that it has maintained its place in the Christian Church to this day. Then again, the world has outlasted the anticipations of its duration which coloured at least the later phases of the Galilean idyll, and which impart a sombre tinge to the whole circle of Apostolic and Apocalyptic thought. Every day on the brink of opened graves we still repeat stately and solemn words which were written when the world was supposed to be hurrying to its catastrophic close. But the prophets of dissolution are dead, and still the old world spins its way "down the ringing grooves of change." And even as it has belied New Testament beliefs as to its speedy end, so also it has belied the beliefs of the same volume as to its beginning. Mankind did not begin with a perfect Adam. Womankind did not emerge from the extracted rib of the first man. Suffering did not enter into the world, nor did the tragedy of death cast its dark shadow on humanity as the result of "man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree," partaken in an idyllic Eden in the morning of time. These are fairy tales, and they have "faded into the light of common day." But they have left their mark on, even if they have not largely shaped, gospel and epistle. In a society which has done with fairy tales as to its own origin we have to ask: What are we to make of a New Testament which is said to be the last word of knowledge on the tremendous questions of life and destiny, and which yet lends its sanction to these fables of the morning? The writer of the great "Quadrilateral" epistles shared these views. If the narrative is to be trusted, Jesus himself accepted many of them. And the stupendous claims made on His behalf by modern Evangelicals compel me to put the question: Are these fables things which we should expect from One represented to be "the Desire of all Nations, the Crown and Essence of Humanity, the Saviour of the World"?

Man, however, has other interests than those of religion. From the

how Jews

7

dawn of intelligence he has observed the world in which he finds himself, and gradually he has come to realise that some reasoned theory of it and its forces is a necessity of his nature. Science is the outcome of this craving for knowledge. Through the æons of his evolving history he has been haunted by an ideal, other and fairer than the actual around him. He has felt an imperious necessity to express these haunting visions, and Art has grown out of his efforts. He early found himself one of a group. Father and mother, sister, brother, wife, and children were around him. Outside his own group were other groups similarly related, and to these he had to adjust himself in some rude order. Here was the beginning of political institutions, and advancing civilisation has meant the slow adaptation of these institutions to a gradually expanding consciousness of social needs and order. I cannot further develop these points. But, in view of the claims with which I am dealing, I must ask: Can we conceive of Jesus believing in and understanding the Copernican system or following the reasonings of Newton? Is it possible to think of Him following the dialectic of Aristotle or entering into the enjoyment of the art of Pheidias? Political science is a necessity of civilisation. But what proof is there in the evidence before us that Jesus had any conception of society as the product of human reason dealing with the facts of associated experience? If Jesus was man only, these questions are irrelevant. But if He was God, they raise, for me, an insoluble difficulty.

Jesus Christ, we are told, is the Universal King. In this phrase, Jesus and Christ have become identified. Jesus imparts to the Christ His own historicity and character; Christ assimilates Jesus. The two make one Person. The worlds of science and of art wait on His inspiration. Principal Fairbairn informs us, in words already quoted, that all the highest activities of the race receive their inspiration from Him: He is the origin and fount of all our thinking and doing; His Person co-ordinates the otherwise aimless impulses of humanity; He alone gives meaning to philosophy, direction and purpose to history. This is the "discovery" which, Principal Fairbairn says, has been made in these recent years, and that not by any designed and meditated counsel on the part of representative spirits in these departments of human activity. Rather it is, that these have become conscious of what was the result of their unpremeditated and manifold labours, and through that awakened consciousness the "historical Christ" has come to His own. The throne of the universe is no longer vacant. On it sits the crowned King of men, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"; and all the saints, sages, poets, and artists of all the earth and all the ages are bidden "to lay their trophies at His feet and crown Him Lord of all."

Yet when we look carefully at the achievements of the human mind we speedily become aware that without the aid of a continuous miracle the suppositions of this theory could not be complied with. Humanity had achieved much before Jesus was born. If He alone is the inspiration

and energising life of humanity, it is pertinent to ask how came we to have religions, literatures, art, sciences, philosophies, politics, and industries, all the contents of many-sided civilisations, thousands of years before He was born?

We know too that claims similar to these have been put forward on behalf of other Saviour-Gods among all the great races of the past. Every type of civilisation has had its Saviour-God. The believers in these knew no world outside their own, and they fondly yet sincerely and earnestly believed that the Saviour-God who had done so much for them was able to save to the uttermost. And, truth to say, when Dr Fairbairn and his disciples come to scrutinise the claims and characters of the Saviour-Gods of other religions they make very short work of the evidence of miracle and history with which such claims are associated. They apply to them the canons by which the children of this scientific age of the West judge of evidence, and the claims vanish at the touch of that Ithuriel spear. Jesus knew nothing of the world of Greek thought. There is no proof that He was aware of that great and real religious reconstruction which found expression in the drama of *Æschylus*, or of those reachings after a deeper spiritual realism breathing through the "Mysteries" of later Greek and Roman thought. Had He been acquainted with the writings of Plato, what marvellous confirmations of His own highest teachings would He not have found in them? Is it conceivable that if he had known of Socrates and Pericles He would have dismissed them to outer darkness as mere heathens? The vast and hoary religious systems of the Farther East lay outside His range of vision; their great saints were wholly unknown to Him. His world, on the evidence before us, was that of Palestine, its problems those of Galilee and Jerusalem, and its literature that of his own nation.

If from the realm of knowledge we pass to that of morals, we meet with sayings attributed to Jesus which raise disturbing reflections. Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount is regarded as the high-water mark of Christian ethics. Yet if we are to regard these "sayings" as regulative words for the guidance of personal character or social order we cannot help being embarrassed. Almsgiving implies a failure of social justice. But the "sayings" contain no recognition of that now widely accepted fact; while the prohibition to have any regard to rewards from men does not apply to the "Father which seeth in secret," whose reward will be given "openly" and may be, apparently, expected. No condemnation is passed on the harsh and cruel law of debtor and creditor, nor would efforts for legal reform find any encouragement from the words attributed to the Master here. On non-resistance and oath-taking the rule attributed to Jesus is absolute. Yet, as a whole, Christendom has openly violated it throughout its history. His most distinguished followers, popes and bishops, have waged wars and consecrated battle-ships; and the existence of Christian armies proves that Jesus has been unable to get His own followers to obey His rule. His teaching on

divorce¹ recognises the husband's right to accuse, judge, condemn, and dismiss the wife; while the wife, having no such rights as against her husband or even over her own children, is left the helpless victim of the husband's caprice. There is no recognition of adultery on the part of the husband as a ground for divorce which the wife might urge, while the right of the husband to decide these matters himself without reference to any constituted law courts strikes the modern mind as callous and iniquitous to the last degree. The teaching is governed throughout by an admission of the iniquitous principle of sex-inferiority as against woman, and let it be remembered this principle has inflicted infinite suffering on half of the human race. Yet Jesus sanctions this sex-subordination, and His ideas rule Christendom to this day. English law has now decreed that divorced persons may legitimately re-marry, and in this particular it has presumed to improve on the ethics of Jesus as to the marriage relationship. We are awaking, somewhat slowly it is true, but still awaking, to the enormous iniquity involved in this sex-inferiority; and the measure of our awaking is the measure of our departure from this part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Provident regard for the future is utterly condemned. "Take no thought for the morrow" is an absolute injunction. But all our Insurance Societies are avowedly founded on the opposite of this. Friendly, Co-operative, and Trade Union Societies are organised on the principle condemned in this sermon, and Christian governments prepare their national budgets at least twelve months in advance. The principle of some of these instructions may have its value as an ideal. But as regulative ideas for the government of personal conduct and associated life they have been useless and they have been mischievous.

Even more mischievous has been the sanction which persecution has drawn from Jesus' reported attitude to possession by evil spirits. As I am here dealing with ethical limitations, I must return to this subject and must press the question: Why did Jesus permit people to believe that evil spirits were the cause of disease, and that He could and did exorcise them?

It is certain that He was mistaken alike in His diagnosis and in His

¹ Matt., c. xix., vv. 3-9; Mark, c. x., vv. 11-12; Luke, c. xvi., v. 18. I have to express my regret that in the first issue of this article in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1909 the reference to Luke xv. 18 was an error. It should have been, of course, Luke, c. xvi., v. 18. The mistake has occasioned curious stumbling to one of my critics, and I would explain that the revision of the article had to be done when I was under the deepest sorrow that can visit man.

Matthew puts power of divorce "for fornication" in the hands of the husband. No such power is given to the woman, though it should be noted that the words, "and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery," are omitted by many ancient authorities. Mark gives to woman the power to issue a bill of divorcement, but leaves the husband without redress or appeal in case of a false accusation. Luke gives power of divorce to the husband, but leaves the case of the woman unmentioned. Early Hebrew practice as to marriage and divorce was probably shaped by Arab custom. Deuteronomy introduced a milder practice, and in Malachi still fairer treatment of the wife is urged. But throughout Old Testament times the right of the wife to sue for divorce was not recognised.

remedy, and the mistake becomes tragical when we remember that His example has been made to justify some of the most atrocious cruelties in history. If He did not know that possession by evil spirits as understood by His countrymen was an error, then His knowledge was at fault. If He did know, and also knew the use that would be made of His example for more than a thousand years after His death, then His acquiescence shows a moral limitation more embarrassing than the intellectual one. Dr Fairbairn, in a perfect *tour de force* of intellectual subtlety, argues that Christ had limitations of knowledge. Writing of this in *Christ in Modern Theology* (p. 353), he says:—

“If He knows as God while He speaks as man, then His speech is not true to His knowledge, and within Him a bewildering struggle must ever proceed to speak as He seems and not as He is.

“If He had such knowledge, how could He remain silent as He faced human ignorance and saw reason wearied with the burden of all its unintelligible mysteries? If men could believe that once there lived on this earth One who had all the knowledge of God yet declined to turn any part of it into science for man, would they not feel their faith in His goodness taxed beyond endurance?”

Let us apply these thoughts to the case of possession by evil spirits. It will be noticed that Dr Fairbairn speaks of Christ, but I may take it that Jesus is meant. Mark reports (i. 23–26):—

“And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.”

Here is acquiescence in the animistic theory of disease, and an exercise of exorcism in which the people apparently thoroughly believed. Now I ask, Did Jesus “know as God” and “speak as man” in this instance? If He was God, He must have known the people’s opinion was an error, and an error too the theory that He had cast an evil spirit out of this man. What are we to think of God, who permits such things and becomes a party to this exorcism? If He did not know that this was an error, then His knowledge was at fault, and what are we to think of a God with limited knowledge? Dr Fairbairn and his followers admit these limitations of knowledge while yet claiming that this admittedly limited Personality was at the same time “Very God of Very God.” These, however, are not merely intellectual limitations. There are also ethical limitations involved, and they touch on the theory of sinlessness. In the case before us Jesus permitted the people to believe that which was not true.

If He was God, He knew that their belief in obsession was an error; He must have known that after ages would quote His example as sanction for superstition and cruelty. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that “One who had all the knowledge of God declined to turn any part of it into science for man” in this instance, and thus allowed humanity to

drift for more than a thousand years through the night of ignorance and cruelty. In a mere man this ethical limitation would be a sin. Is it otherwise in One who is said to be God?

These considerations seem to prove that modern Evangelicals, many of the "New Theologians," and not a few conservative Unitarians are in difficulties with their idea of Jesus Christ. Jesus limits and localises Christ; Christ extinguishes Jesus. Dr Fairbairn tells us (*Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 352) that "the terms under which Christ lived His life were those of our common non-miraculous humanity. We know no other. To be perfect and whole man must mean that as regards whatever is proper to manhood He is man and not something else." But it presently appears that He is something else, for though (*Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 355) "the normal manhood has its home in Judæa and its history written by the Evangelists," "the supernatural Person has no home, lives through all time, acts on and in all mankind." To me this seems "to say and straight unsay" in the same breath, and makes me feel that in theology English words do not convey their common meaning. Principal Griffith Jones, too, writes of Jesus Christ: "He Himself was the subject of a spiritual evolution" (*The Ascent through Christ*, p. 332). I am not sure that I know what a spiritual evolution is, but perhaps I put no strain on the word when I say that it implies the passage from a less developed to a more developed state. If so, there was a moment when Jesus Christ was less than God, and a subsequent moment when he was more of God. But this implies imperfection and limitation, with a gradual emergence from their shadows, and I must admit that I can attach no meaning to a limited God emerging slowly from imperfection and limitation. Nor is that all. Does "spiritual evolution" imply that the full and perfect type lies at the beginning of the process? As usually understood, an evolutionary process starts from an undeveloped cell, and by the pressure of environing forces reaches the more fully developed stage. "Spiritual evolution" reverses this process. It places the developed stage—the "Christ"—at the beginning, and two thousand years of evolution have only secured us partial realisations of what the Christ was at the start. And yet it is this same Christ who is continually growing.

Dr Percy Gardner, in *A Historic View of the New Testament*, Lecture III., writes quite frankly:—

"The more closely we examine the documents of early Christianity, the more fully do we acquiesce in the dictum of Dr Edersheim that the materials for a life of Jesus in any objective sense do not exist. It will probably always remain an impossibility to set forth even a brief narrative of the Founder's life which history can accept as demonstrated fact. Even the chronological skeleton of such a life cannot be sketched with certainty."

"I endeavour in these lectures to observe a distinction very conducive to clearness of thought. In speaking of the earthly life of the Master, I call Him, with the Evangelists, Jesus; in speaking of the exalted Head of the Christian Society, I use with Paul the term Christ. In cases where the meaning is between these two, the phrase Jesus Christ is applicable."

But the eminent scholars with whom I am dealing habitually quote words and actions attributed to Jesus and apply them to Christ. They thus gain for the mystical and spiritual Christ that objectivity which, assuming His historicity, belongs properly only to Jesus. This process seems to me wholly illegitimate. I want to put this matter quite as clearly and yet as reverently as I can, for it is the very heart of the disturbance which the modern mind feels in presence of the enormous claims made on behalf of Jesus. If Jesus was one of, or if He even was Himself, the highest and best in "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," then that He should be found subject to the intellectual, ethical, and emotional limitations of an Isaiah or an Amos would not diminish our obligations to Him or abate by one iota our reverence for His character and work. But when we are told He is the universal King, the full and final perfection of humanity's reach, the Divine Exemplar, towards whose far off, infinitely distant perfection humanity must aspire and toil through the illimitable ages of the future, then the limitations of outlook, evasions of issues, disillusionments of experience shown in the Gospels assume an altogether different aspect.

I will take the risk of much ridicule by saying frankly that the "historical Christ," as used by the apologists, is a phrase which embarrasses me. If it means an enriching and expanding "Ideal" to which history bears its witness, and from the hope inspired by which humanity may draw encouragement and strength in its conflict with ignorance and wrong, I, for one, will subscribe myself a believer. I admit the "Ideal" has had a history, and that in this sense it may well be described as historical. But I do not think this is at all what the eminent scholars I have been dealing with mean. They habitually quote as divinely decisive, words and actions attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. This conveys to me the impression that they believe Jesus was God. Yet almost every chapter of the Gospels bears testimony to the limitations within which Jesus lived and wrought. And though the physical limitations are by now freely admitted even by conservative scholars, the political, economic, social, intellectual, and ethical limitations are no less apparent. Dr Drummond tells us that the Divine Thought was "God Himself passing into self-manifestation." But when the position is even thus stated it compels us to ask, Did the "Divine Thought" give us the passages about woman and her treatment reported in that "Sermon" which is the admitted bed-rock of Christian ethics? Did "God Himself" permit people to believe that exorcism was successfully performed? If so, there was Divine sanction given to the practice of the art through the Christian centuries, to its retention to this day by the Catholic Church, and to the nameless barbarities inflicted on the most helpless of mankind through the long night of the "ages of faith." Even Dr J. Estlin Carpenter tells us, "He (Jesus) was obliged to use the forms of thought provided by his age, and they were inadequate to the greatness of his ideas. His principles far transcended the moulds which the time

provided" (*The First Three Gospels*, p. 349, People's Edition). But did Jesus' proclamation of the Fatherhood of God "far transcend" what may be found in many a passage of Seneca? What was there in "the forms of thought provided by his age" to prevent Him from condemning the fiscal oppressions and land monopolies of His time? The Hebrew prophets before Him had done so in no measured speech. Why did He not do so? Are we to account for this silence on the plea urged by a recent anonymous but able writer (*The Creed of Buddha*) for the silence of the Indian saint?

Though much poetry has been expended upon it, I cannot understand what is meant by an "Imperfect God." Nor do I find any real assistance when homely English is exchanged for ambitious Greek, and scholars speak of a "Kenosis" and of a "Kenotic theory" involving real limitations in the Infinite and Omniscient God. The "emptying" of the Infinite God, whether in Greek or in English, is a process which conveys to me no intelligible meaning. Identifying Jesus with Christ, they make God a Being who is omnipotent, yet limited in power; omniscient, yet defective in knowledge; infinitely good, yet One who declines "to turn any part of His knowledge as God into science for man." This seems to me to be language which stultifies itself. It would be an abuse of language to say that it deals with a mystery. It is flat contradiction.

R. ROBERTS.

BRADFORD.

THE DIVINE ORDER OF GOD, NATURE, AND MAN

A Philosophical Conception of Christ as the Triune "Word" (or Act) of Purpose—Method—Force.

(Subjective)

GOD

as the One Self-existent, Eternal, Omnipotent Personal Creative Being, of whom is postulated a Trinity of subordinate Hypostases, namely:—

- (A) MORAL HYPOSTASIS—with Infinite cognition of Ends—of which the highest attribute is GOODNESS.
- (B) INTELLECTUAL HYPOSTASIS — with Infinite cognition of means, method, or design—of which the highest attribute is WISDOM.
- (C) ENERGETIC HYPOSTASIS—with Infinite cognition of Forces—of which the highest attribute is adjustment of POWER to requirement.

Moves and energises in invariable threefold Form of simultaneous thought - operation in, by, and through the passive media of *Matter, Space, and Time*, and indicates His Nature and His Will and Way by the Form in which He manifests Himself—this form constituting the "Word" of God, and being apprehensible under the specific denomination of

(Objective)

THE "WORD" or SON OF GOD as manifested in, or through, Christ, the Messiah, or Divine Logos—the Essence, outcome, Image, aspect, and expression of God in His Triune *Objective Actuality* as distinguished from God in His Triune *Subjective Potentiality*. The intermediate Agent or Existence, according to Whom God created and sustains the World—the revelation of the Will and Way of God as discoverable (subjectively) in the essential Form of Man's nature, and (objectively) in the ultimate Form of unfoldment or Evolution in Nature.

- (A) PURPOSE — or movement to an Infinite extent of Thought - operation towards an end (*Objectivisation*).
- (B) METHOD — or movement to an Infinite extent of Thought - operation in some particular way or design best calculated to attain the end (*Methodisation*).
- (C) FORCE—or movement to an Infinite extent of Thought - operative energy to consummate the end (*Energisation*.)

(Subjective)

MAN

as Ego, Will, spirit, individuality, and personality in unity, with a trinity of subordinate faculties, organs, or unities under the supremacy of the Will, namely:—

- (a) MORAL faculty or organ — the natural function of which is *apprehension of ends*, and which instinctively imposes upon the subject - matter of consciousness its representative notion, idea, or "form" of *Purpose*.
- (b) INTELLECTUAL faculty or organ—the function of which is *apprehension of means, method, or design*, and imposes upon the subject - matter of consciousness its notion or "form" of *Method*.
- (c) PHYSICAL faculty or organ—the natural function of which is *apprehension of forces*, and imposes upon the subject - matter of consciousness its notion or "form" of *Force*.

Moves instinctively in threefold Form of thought - operation and manifests himself in and upon the passivities of *Matter, Space, and Time*, as now disclosed under the specific denomination of

(Objective)

THE ACT or finite triune Objective "Word" or logos of man—being the image and form manifestation of the essence or substance of the man himself as enshrined in each and all of the acts of his life in their Objective actuality as distinct from man in his triune Subjective capacity—The unit of Objective existence or "the One in the All and the All in the One." The standard or criterion by which all things are to be judged, viz. by *TELOMETHODOCRACY*.

- (a) PURPOSE — or finite intuitive movement of thought towards an end (*Objectivisation*), the highest attribute of which is *goodness*.
- (b) METHOD — or finite intuitive movement of thought in some particular way or design best calculated to attain the end (*Methodisation*) the highest attribute of which is *wisdom*.
- (c) FORCE — or finite intuitive movement of thought in the way of application of Energy to consummate the end (*Energisation*) the highest attribute of which is exact adequacy of *power* to requirement.

NOTE ON SYNOPSIS.—The above is intended to call the attention of Theologians to the vital bearing upon religious thought of the author's inductive discovery of the invariable Subjective-Objective triune law, form, or mode, of divine, human, and creaturely activity—a discovery which is put forward as a basis upon which can be founded a philosophy in which Religion and Science are reconciled by a formula which is alike "according to Christ" and according to the true order of Nature. Taking the primary faculties (Moral, Intellectual, and Physical) of man's spirit or personality as unitedly constituting the active sphere of the "Kingdom of God" in a man, and as being the avenues through which the Self is unfolded, and following the Baconian philosophy in seeking for the "Form" or essence of these faculties, they will be found to be resolvable into a trinity of forms of *Purpose, Method, Force*, and which converge into, and radiate from, the unity of the Ego. This threefold Form is the first rational form of knowledge which is called into being by every act of consciousness, and is to be regarded as the essential mould or pattern of "the law of God after the inward man." It is the "earthen vessel" of "The Way, the Truth, and the Life"—the expression of the "Living Word" as distinguished from the spoken or written Word; it is also the verbal expression of the ultimate law or form of Evolution in the Moral, Intellectual, and Physical worlds, seeing that every operation in Nature and man is reducible to these three factors, and which makes clear the "invisible things" of Romans 1:20, because they are to be discerned "through the things that are made." See affinities with the Jewish Memra or "Word," with the "Idea" of Plato, the Entelechy of Aristotle, and the "Monad" of Leibnitz. An illustrative example of the intuitive operation of the human mind might be that of a man in the street suddenly becoming conscious of the swift approach of a motor-car. The first apprehension and movement of his mind is of and towards an end—a *purpose* to get out of danger; the next notion is of a *method* of doing it, which might be either by walking, running, or springing to the footpath. But this purpose, and this method, would be of no avail without a notion and movement of the amount of *force* adequate to consummate the purpose, and thus complete this instantaneous "trine act."

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